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R. K. Narayan

Emden

WHEN HE CAME to be named the oldest man in town, Rao's age was estimated anywhere between ninety and one hundred and five. He had, however, lost count of time long ago and abominated birthdays; especially after his eightieth, when his kinsmen from everywhere came down in a swarm and involved him in elaborate rituals, and with blaring pipes and drums made a public show of his attaining eighty. The religious part of it was so strenuous that he was laid up for fifteen days thereafter with fever. During the ceremony they poured pots of cold water, supposedly fetched from sacred rivers, over his head, and forced him to undergo a fast, while they themselves feasted gluttonously. He was so fatigued at the end of the day that he could hardly pose for the group photo, but flopped down in his chair, much to the annoyance of the photographer, who constantly withdrew his head from under the black hood to plead, "Steady, please." Finally, he threatened to pack up and leave unless they propped up the old gentleman. There were seventy-five heads to be counted in the group—all Rao's descendants one way or another. The photographer insisted upon splitting the group, as otherwise the individuals would be microscopic and indistinguishable on a single plate. That meant that after a little rest Rao had to be propped up a second time in the honoured seat. When he protested against this entire ceremony, they explained, "It's a propitiatory ceremony to give you health and longevity."

"Seems to me rather a device to pack off an old man quickly", he said, at which his first daughter, herself past sixty, admonished him not to utter inauspicious remarks, when everyone was doing so much to help.

By the time he recovered from his birthday celebrations and the group photo in two parts could be hung on the wall, the house had become quiet and returned to its normal strength, which was about twenty in all—three of his sons and their families, an assortment of their children, nephews and nieces. He had his room in the right wing of the house, which he had designed and built in the last century as it looked. He had been the very first to buy a piece of land beyond Vinayak Street; it was considered an act of great daring in those days, being a deserted stretch of land from which thieves could easily slip away into the woods beyond, even in daylight; the place, however, developed into a residential colony and was named Ratnapuri, which meant City of Gems.

Rao's earlier years were spent in Kabir Street. When he came into his own and decided to live in style, he sold off their old house and moved to Ratnapuri. That was after his second wife had borne him four daughters, and the last of them was married off. He had moved along with his first wife's progeny, which numbered eight of varying ages. He seemed to be peculiarly ill-fated in matrimony—his uncle, who cast and read the stars for the whole family, used to say that Rao had Mars in the seventh house, with no other planet to checkmate its fury, and hence was bound to lose every wife. After the third marriage and more children, he was convinced of the malevolence of Mars; he didn't keep a record of population at home—that was not his concern—his sons were capable of running the family and managing the crowd at home. He detached himself from all transactions and withdrew so completely that a couple of years past the grand ceremony of the eightieth birthday he could not remember the names of most of the children at home or who was who, or how many were living under his roof.

The eightieth birthday had proved a definite landmark in his domestic career. Aided by the dimming of his faculties, he could isolate himself with no effort whatever. He was philosophical enough to accept nature's readjust-

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ments: "If I see less or hear less, so much the better. Nothing lost. My legs are still strong enough to take me about, and I can bathe and wash without help. . . . I enjoy my food and digest it." Although they had a dining table, he refused to change his ancient habit of sitting on a rosewood plank on the floor and eating off a banana leaf in a corner of the dining hall. Everything for him went on automatically, and he didn't have to ask for anything, since his needs were anticipated; a daughter-in-law or niece or granddaughter or a great-grand someone or other was always there to attend him unasked. He did not comment or question, particularly not question, as he feared they would bawl in his left ear and strain their vocal chords, though if they approached his right ear he could guess what they might be saying. But he didn't care either way. His retirement was complete. He had worked hard all his life to establish himself, and provide for his family, each figure in the two-part group photograph owing its existence to him directly or indirectly. Some of the grandchildren had been his favourites at one time or another, but they had all grown out of recognition, and their names—names! they were the greatest impediments to speech—every name remains on the tip of one's tongue but is gone when you want to utter it. This trick of nature reduces one to a state of babbling and stammering without ever completing a sentence. Even such a situation was acceptable, as it seemed to be ordained by nature to keep the mind uncluttered in old age.

He reflected and introspected with clarity in the afternoons—the best part of the day for him, when he had had his siesta; got up and had his large tumbler of coffee (brought to his room exactly at three by one of the ministering angels, and left on a little *teapoy* beside the door). After his coffee he felt revived, reclined in his easy-chair, placed to catch the light at the northern window, and unfolded the morning paper, which, after everyone had read it, was brought and placed beside his afternoon coffee. Holding it close enough, he could read, if he wiped his glasses from time to time with a silk rag tied to the arm of his chair; thus comfortably settled, he half-read and half-ruminated. The words and acts of politicians or warmongers sounded stale—they spoke and acted in the same manner since the beginning of time; his eyes travelled down the columns—sometimes an advertisement caught his eye (nothing but an invitation to people to squander their money on all kinds of fanciful things), or reports of deaths (not one recognisable name among the dead). On the last page of the paper, however, half a column invariably gripped his attention—that was a daily report of a religious or philosophical discourse at some meeting at Madras; brief reports, but adequate for him to brush up his thoughts on God, on His incarnations and on definitions of Good and Evil. At this point, he would brood for a while and then fold and put away the paper exactly where he had found it, to be taken away later.

When he heard the hall clock chime four, he stirred himself to go out on a walk. This part of the day's routine was anticipated by him with a great thrill. He washed and put on a long shirt which came down to his knees, changed to a white dhoti, wrapped around his shoulder an embroidered cotton shawl, seized his staff and an umbrella and sallied out. When he crossed the hall, someone or other always cautioned him by bellowing, "Be careful. Have you got the torch? Usual round? Come back soon." He would just nod and pass on. Once outside, he moved with caution, taking each step only after divining the nature of the ground with the tip of his staff. His whole aim in life was to avoid a fall. One false step and that would be the end. Longevity was guaranteed as long as he maintained his equilibrium and verticality. This restriction forced him to move at snail's pace, and along a well-defined orbit every evening.

Leaving his gate, he kept himself to the extreme left of the street, along Vinayak Street, down Kabir Lane and into Market Road. He loved the bustle, traffic and crowds of Market Road—paused to gaze into shops and marvel at the crowd passing in and out perpetually. He shopped but rarely—the last thing he remembered buying was a crayon set and a drawing book for some child at home. For himself he needed to buy only a particular brand of toothpowder (most of his teeth were still intact), for which he occasionally stopped at Chettiar's at the far end of Market Road, where it branched off to Ellaman Street. When he passed in front of the shop, the shopman would always greet him from his seat, "How are you, sir? Want something to take home today?" Rao would shake his head and cross over to the other side

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of the road—this was the spot where his orbit curved back, and took him homeward, the whole expedition taking him about two hours. Before 6:30, he would be back at his gate, never having to use his flashlight, which he carried in his shirt pocket only as a precaution against any sudden eclipse of the sun or an unexpected nightfall.

The passage both ways would always be smooth and uneventful, although he would feel nervous while crossing the Market Gate, where Jayaraj the photo-framer always hailed him from his little shop, "Grand Master, shall I help you across?" Rao would spurn that offer silently and pass on; one had to concentrate on one's steps to avoid bumping into the crowd at the Market Gate, and had no time for people like Jayaraj. After he had passed, Jayaraj, who enjoyed gossiping, would comment to his clients seated on a bench, "At his age! Moves through the crowd as if he were in the prime of youth. Must be at least a hundred and ten! See his recklessness. It's not good to let him out like this. His people are indifferent. Not safe these days. With all these lorries, bicycles and auto-rickshaws, he'll come to grief someday, I'm sure. . . ."

"Who's he?" someone might ask, perhaps a newcomer to the town, waiting for his picture to be framed.

"We used to call him 'Emden'."[1] We were terrified of him when we were boys. He lived somewhere in Kabir Street. Huge, tall and imposing when he went down the road on his bicycle in his khaki uniform and a red turban and all kinds of badges. We took him to be a police inspector from his dress—not knowing that he wore the uniform of the Excise Department. He also behaved like the police—if he noticed anyone doing something he did not like, he'd go thundering at him, chase him down the street and lay the cane on his back. When we were boys, we used to loiter about the market in gangs, and if he saw us he'd scatter us and order us home. Once he caught us urinating against the school wall at Adam's Street, as we always did. He came down on us with a roar, seized four of us and shook us till our bones rattled, pushed us up before the headmaster and demanded, 'What are you doing, Headmaster? Is this the way you train them? Or do you want them to turn out to be guttersnipes? Why don't you keep an eye on them and provide a latrine in your school?' The headmaster rose in his seat, trembling and afraid to come too close to this terrible personality flourishing a cane. Oh, how many such things in his heyday! People were afraid of him. He might well have been a policeman for all his high-and-mighty style, but his business was only to check the taverns selling drinks—And you know how much he collected at the end of the day? Not less than five hundred rupees, that is, fifteen thousand a month, not even a governor could earn so much. No wonder he could build a fancy house at Ratnapuri and bring up his progeny in style. Oh, the airs that family give themselves! He narrowly escaped being prosecuted—if a national award were given for bribe-taking, it would go to him: when he was dismissed from service, he gave out that he had voluntarily retired! None the worse for it, has enough wealth to last ten generations. Emden! Indeed! He married several wives, seems to have worn them out one after another; that was in addition to counterless sideshows, ha! ha! When we were boys, he was the talk of the town: some of us stealthily followed and spied on his movements in the dark lanes at night, and that provided us a lot of fun. He had great appetite for the unattached female tribe, such as nurses and school-mistresses, and went after them like a bull! Emden, really! . . ." Jayaraj's tongue wagged while his hands were cutting, sawing and nailing a picture frame, and ceased the moment the work was finished, and he would end his narrations with: "That'll be five rupees—special rate for you because you have brought the picture of Krishna, who is my family god. I've not charged for the extra rings for hanging. . . ."

RAO KEPT his important papers stacked in an *almirah*, which he kept locked, and the key hidden under a lining paper in another cupboard where he kept his clothes and a few odds and ends, and the key of this second cupboard also was hidden somewhere, so that no one could have access to the two cupboards, which virtually contained all the clues to his life. Occasionally on an afternoon, at his hour of clarity and energy, he'd leave his easy-chair, bolt the door and open the first cupboard, take

[1] A German warship that shelled Madras in 1916; ever since, the term indicates anyone who is formidable and ruthless.

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out the key under the paper lining, and then open the other cupboard containing his documents—title-deeds, diaries, papers and a will.

Today he finished reading the newspaper in ten minutes, and had reached his favourite column on the last page—the report of a discourse on reincarnations, to explain why one was born, what one was, and the working of the law of *karma*. Rao found it boring also: he was familiar with that kind of moralising and philosophy. It was not four yet; the reading was over too soon. He found an unfilled half-hour between the newspaper reading and his usual time for the evening outing. He rose from the chair, neatly folded the newspaper and put it away on the little stool outside his door, and gently shut and bolted the door—noiselessly, because if they heard him shut the door, they would come up and caution him, "Don't bolt", out of fear that if he fell dead they might have to break the door open. Others were obsessed with the idea of *his* death as if they were all immortals!

He unlocked the cupboard and stood for a moment gazing at the papers tied into neat bundles—all the records of his official career from the start to his "voluntary retirement" were there on the top shelf, in dusty and yellowing paper: he had shut the cupboard doors tight, yet somehow fine dust seeped in and settled on everything. He dared not touch anything for fear of soiling his fingers and catching a cold. He must get someone to destroy them, best to put them in a fire; but whom could he trust? He hated the idea of anyone reading those memos from the government in the latter days of his service—he'd prefer people not to know the official mess and those threats of enquiries before he quit the service. The Secretary to the Government was a demon out to get his blood—inspired by anonymous letters and backbiters. Only one man had stood by him—his first assistant, wished he could remember his name or whereabouts—good fellow; if he were available he'd set him to clean and arrange his *almirah* and burn the papers: he'd be dependable, and would produce the ash if asked. But who was he? He patted his forehead as if to jerk the memory-machine into action. . . . And then his eyes roved down to the next shelf; he ran his fingers over them lovingly—all documents relating to his property and their disposal after his death. No one in the house could have any idea of it or dare come near them. He must get the lawyer-man (what was his name again?) and closet himself with him some day. He was probably also dead. Not a soul seemed to be left in town. . . . Anyway, must try to send someone to fetch him if he was alive, it was to be done secretly. How? Somehow.

His eyes travelled to a shelf with an assortment of packets containing receipts, bills and several diaries. He had kept a diary regularly for several years, recording a bit of daily observation or event on each page. He always bought the same brand of diary, called "Matchless"—of convenient size, ruled pages, with a flap that could be buttoned so that no one could casually open its pages and read its contents. The Matchless Stationery Mart off the main market manufactured it. On the last day of every December he would stop by for a copy costing four rupees—rather expensive but worth the price . . . more often than not the man would not take money for it, as he'd seek some official favour worth much more. Rao was not the sort to mind dispensing his official favours if it helped some poor soul. There was a stack of thirty old diaries in there (at some point in his life, he had abandoned the practice), which contained the gist of all his day-to-day life and thought: that again was something, an offering for the God of Fire before his death. He stood ruminating at the sight of the diaries. He pulled out one from the stack at random, wiped the thin layer of dust with a towel, went back to his chair and turned over the leaves casually. The diary was fifty-one years old. After glancing through some pages, he found it difficult to read his own close calligraphy in black ink and decided to put it back, as it was time to prepare for his walk. However, he said to himself, "Just a minute. Let me see what I did on this date, on the same day, so long ago. . . ." He looked at the calendar on the wall. The date was the twentieth of March. He opened the diary and leafed through the earlier pages, marvelling at the picture they presented of his early life: what a lot of activities morning till night, connected with the family, office and personal pursuits! His eyes smarted; he skipped longer passages and concentrated on the briefer ones. On the same day fifty-one years ago—the page contained only four lines, which read: "Too lenient with S. She deserves to be taught a lesson. . . ." This triggered a memory, and he could almost hear the echo of his own shouting at somebody, and the next few lines indicated the course of

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action: "Thrashed her soundly for her own good and left. Will not see her again. . . . How can I accept the responsibility? She must have had an affair—after all a D.G.[2] Wish I had locked her in before leaving." He studied this entry dispassionately. He wondered who it was. The initial was not helpful. He had known no one with a name beginning with S. Among the ladies he had favoured in his days, it could be anyone . . . but names were elusive anyway.

With great effort, he kept concentrating on this problem. His forehead throbbed with the strain of concentration. Of course, the name eluded him, but the geography was coming back to him in fragments. From Chettiar Stores . . . yes, he remembered going up Market Road . . . and noted the light burning at the shop facing him even at a late hour when returning home; that meant he had gone in that narrow street branching off from Market Road at that point, and that led to a parallel street . . . from there one went on and on and twisted and turned in a maze of by-lanes and reached that house—a few steps up before tapping gently on the rosewood door studded with brass stars, which would open at once as if she was waiting on the other side; he'd slip in and shut the door immediately, lest the neighbours be watching, and retrace his steps at midnight. But he went there only two days in the week, when he had free time. . . . Her name, no, could not get it, but he could recollect her outline rather hazily—fair, plump and loving and jasmine-smelling; he was definite that the note referred to this woman, and not to another one, also plump and jasmine-smelling somewhere not so far away . . . he remembered slapping a face and flouncing out in a rage. The young fellow was impetuous and hot-blooded . . . must have been someone else, not himself in any sense. He could not remember the house, but there used to be a coconut palm and a well in the street in front of the house . . . it suddenly flashed across his mind that the name of the street was Gokulam.

HE ROSE AND LOCKED AWAY the diary and secreted the key as usual, washed and dressed, and picked up his staff and umbrella and put on his sandals, with a quiet thrill. He had decided to venture beyond his orbit today, to go up and look for the ancient rosewood, brass-knobbed door, beside the coconut tree in that maze. From Chettiar Stores, his steps were bound to lead him on in the right direction, and if S. was there and happened to stand at the street door, he'd greet her . . . he might not be able to climb the four steps, but he'd offer her a small gift and greeting from the street. She could come down and take it. He should not have slapped her face . . . he had been impetuous and cruel. He should not have acted on jealousy . . . he was filled with remorse. After all, she must have shown him a great deal of kindness and given him pleasure ungrudgingly—otherwise, why would one stay until midnight?

While he tap-tapped his way out of his house now, someone in the hall enquired as usual, "Got your torch? Rather late today. Take care of yourself." He was excited. The shopman on the way, who habitually watched and commented, noted that the old man was moving rather jauntily today. "Oh, Respected One, good day to you, sir", said Mani from his cycle shop. "In such a hurry today? Walk slowly, sir, road is dug up everywhere." Rao looked up and permitted himself a gentle nod of recognition. He did not hear the message, but he could guess what Mani might be saying. He was fond of him—a great-grandson of that fellow who had studied with him at Albert Mission School. Name? As usual Mani's great-grandfather's name kept slipping away . . . he was some Ram or Shankar or something like that. Oh what a teaser! He gave up and passed on. He kept himself to the edge as usual, slowed down his pace after Mani's advice; after all, his movement should not be noticeable, and it was not good to push oneself in that manner and pant with the effort.

At Jagan's Sweets, he halted. Some unknown fellow at the street counter. Children were crowding in front of the stall holding forth money and asking for this and that. They were blocking the way. He waited impatiently and tapped his staff noisily on the ground till the man at the counter looked up and asked, "Anything, master?" Rao waved away the children with a flourish of his stick and approached the counter and feasted his eyes on the heaped-up sweets in different colours and shapes, and wished for a moment he could eat recklessly as he used to. But perhaps that'd cost him his life

[2] Dancing Girl, a term denoting a public woman in those days.

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today—the secret of his survival being the spartan life he led, rigorously suppressing the cravings of the palate. He asked, "What's fresh today?" The man at the counter said, "We prepare everything fresh every day. Nothing is yesterday's. . . ." Rao could only partly guess what he was saying but, without betraying himself, said, "Pack up *jilebi* for three rupees. . . ." He counted out the cash carefully, received the packet of *jilebi*, held it near his nostrils (the smell of food would not hurt, and there was no medical advice against it), for a moment relishing its rose-scented flavour; and was on his way again. Arriving at the point of Chettiar Stores, he paused and looked up at his right—yes that street was still there as he had known it. . . .

Noticing him hesitating there, the shopman hailed from his shop, "Oh, Grand Master, you want anything?" He felt annoyed. Why couldn't they leave him alone? And then a young shop assistant came out to take his order. Rao looked down at him and asked, pointing at the cross street, "Where does it lead?"

"To the next street", the boy said, and that somehow satisfied him. The boy asked, "What can I get you?"

"Oh, will no one leave me alone?" Rao thought with irritation. They seemed to assume that he needed something all the time. He hugged the packet of sweets close to his chest, along with the umbrella slung on the crook of his arm. The boy seemed to be bent on selling him something. And so he said, "Have you sandalwood soap?" He remembered that S., or whoever it was, used to be fond of it. The boy got it for him with alacrity. Its fragrance brought back some old memories. He had thought there was a scent of jasmine about S., but he realised now that it must have been that of sandalwood. He smelt it nostalgically before thrusting it into his pocket. "Anything else, sir?" asked the boy. "No, you may go", and he crossed Market Road over to the other side.

TRUSTING HIS INSTINCT to guide him, he proceeded along the cross street ahead of Chettiar Stores. It led to another street running parallel, where he took a turn to his left on an impulse, and then again to his right into a lane, and then left, and then about-turn—but there was no trace of Gokulam Street. As he tap-tapped along, he noticed a cobbler on the roadside, cleared his throat, struck his staff on the ground to attract attention and asked, "Here, which way to Gokulam Street?" At first, the cobbler shook his head, then, to get rid of the enquirer, pointed vaguely in some direction and resumed his stitching. "Is there a coconut tree in this street?" The other once again pointed along the road. Rao felt indignant. "Haughty beggar", he muttered. "In those days I'd have. . . ." He moved on, hoping he'd come across the landmark. He stopped a couple of others to ask the same question, and that did not help. No coconut tree anywhere. He was sure that it was somewhere here that he used to come, but everything was changed. All the generation of men and women who could have known Gokulam Street and the coconut tree were dead—new generations around here, totally oblivious of the past. He was a lone survivor.

He moved cautiously now, as the sun was going down. He became rather nervous and jabbed his staff down at each step, afraid of stumbling into a hole. It was a strain moving in this fashion, so slow and careful, and he began to despair that he'd ever reach the Market Road again. He began to feel anxious, regretted this expedition. The family would blame him if he should have a mishap. Somehow he felt more disturbed at the thought of their resentment than of his own possible suffering. But he kept hobbling along steadily. Some passers-by paused to stare at him and comment on his perambulation. At some point, his staff seemed to stab through a soft surface; at the same moment a brown mongrel, which had lain curled up in dust, in perfect camouflage, sprang up with a piercing howl. Rao instinctively jumped, as he had not done for decades, luckily without falling down but the packet of *jilebi* flew from his grip and landed in front of the mongrel, who picked it up and trotted away, wagging his tail in gratitude. Rao looked after the dog helplessly and resumed his journey homeward. Brooding over it, he commented to himself, "Who knows, S. is perhaps in this incarnation now. . . ."

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Martin Esslin

The Bitter Bread of Exile

Brecht between the Soviet Union & the USA

Tu lascerai ogni cosa diletta
Più caramente, e questo è quello stralo
Che l'arco dello esilio pria saetta.

Tu proverai sì come sa di sale
Lo pane altrui, e com'è duro calle
Lo scendere e il salir per l'altrui scale.

E quel che più ti graverà le spalle
Sarà la compagnia malvagia e scempia
Con la qual tu cadrai in questa valle,

Che tutta ingrata, tutta matta ed empia
Si farà contro a te. . . .

DANTE, **Paradiso, XVII. 55–65***

THE EXODUS of the German intellectuals from Hitler's *Reich* after his advent to power on 30 January 1933—almost half-a-century ago—was one of the most momentous shifts in the cultural centre of gravity the Western world has known, comparable perhaps only with the effects of the influx of Byzantine scholars to Italy after the collapse of the Eastern Roman Empire.

The plight of the many writers among these exiles was particularly tragic. They lived by their language; and even before the outbreak of war the area where German books, newspapers, and periodicals could still be freely produced was shrinking: at first Switzerland, Austria, the German-speaking parts of Czechoslovakia remained more or less open to them, while these countries were still free from Nazi domination. And, of course, the growing colonies of refugees in Holland, France, Belgium and other countries where German intellectuals had found refuge provided additional, if restricted, outlets for the work of the German writers.

I still remember—I was a schoolboy at the time—the stream of melancholy, somewhat bedraggled if still genteelly dressed figures that passed through my father's house in Vienna in the early months of 1933. These writers and journalists talked about their achievements, the fine positions they had occupied, the books they had written: they were all looking for regular work. Each had a plan for a new periodical he wanted to edit, or for a new world-shaking book that would expose the Nazi sham to a world as yet unaware of the dangers that régime of unscrupulous gangsters represented. (As though the Western world were interested in those warnings that later turned out to be only too well founded!) And I recall among these visitors the grave, swarthy features of Julius Hay, the Hungarian dramatist who had established himself as one of the leading playwrights in pre-Hitler Berlin: soft-spoken, with deeply melancholy eyes. His latest play had just been directed by Max Reinhardt at the *Deutsches Theater*—the last production before it was taken over by the Nazis. A Communist, Hay fell foul of the Austrian authorities after the brief civil war in February 1934 (when the Social Democrats were suppressed by the Austrian Catholic-Fascist party). He spent some months in prison, and after his release emigrated to the Soviet Union.

Julius Hay figures prominently in a book which, for the first time, gives a detailed account of the

* You will leave everything that you love/most dearly, and that is the arrow/that first the bow of exile aims at you.
You will experience how much tastes of salt/the bread of others and how hard a path/is going up and down on others' stairs.
But what will heaviest weigh upon your shoulders/will be the vile and worthless company/with whom you will plunge into that vale.
Who, all ungrateful, crazy, impious/will turn against you. . . . (*trans.* M.E.

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fate of the German writers who emigrated to "the homeland of the world's socialists."[1] The author, David Pike, an American scholar who has succeeded in gaining access to the archives of some of the main German *émigré* publications in the Soviet Union, as well as to documentation in Hungary (for example the Georg Lukács archive) and the East German *DDR*, gives a highly revealing account of the tragic story of that particular segment of the German literary emigration. Among the protagonists of this story we find Bertolt Brecht, that paradigmatic representative of German exiled literature. Although Brecht did not become one of the German *émigrés* in the USSR, he was deeply involved with events as a visitor, a friend of many of the more prominent members of the emigration, and also as editor—from a distance—of the leading German *émigré* periodical, published in Moscow. The recent publication of the first collected edition of Brecht's letters[2]—however incomplete, and obviously censored for political and personal motives best known to Brecht's heirs and his West German publisher—usefully supplements this side of the story of the German exiled writers in Stalin's empire. A very well researched and lucidly written study of Brecht's years in his eventual American exile, published in 1980, offers an illuminating contrast.[3]

Brecht thus provides a useful focal point for some reflections on the "culture shock" and the subsequent process of painful adjustment—or total failure to adapt—that shaped the fate of the many eminent literary exiles who had landed at the two extreme ends of the non-Nazi world. It is, surely, a phenomenon worthy of some attention: for it highlights the predicament of Europeans who were confronted with the totally alien attitudes and traditions of the two new superpowers that were soon to become the dominant influences on the shape of world events in the second half of the century, both heirs to Europe's cultural patrimony, and yet diverging from it violently and profoundly.

IN THE SOVIET UNION the German exiled writers and intellectuals found themselves confronted with a world of Byzantine intrigue, suspicion and corrupt bureaucracy, when they had gone there with expectations of entering a realm of Utopian friendliness and light, the fulfilment of all their dreams of humanistic perfection. In the United States Brecht and his fellow exiles encountered a world equally alien and disturbing: a country totally unaware of the status intellectuals had enjoyed in Europe and oblivious of any obligation to honour them.

In the last years of the Weimar Republic the Soviet Union had an increasingly high reputation among German left-wing intellectuals. Willi Münzenberg's extensive propaganda organisation and publishing empire and the output of publishers like Malik Verlag, together with highly successful tours of Soviet theatres (the Moscow Arts Theatre, Meyerhold's and Tairov's troupes), as well as the immense prestige enjoyed by the Soviet films of directors like Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Vertov, had won over many artists and writers. Piscator and Brecht, George Grosz and Alfred Döblin, Heinrich Mann and Arnold Zweig were among those who regarded the Soviet Union as a beacon of freedom and humanity in a darkening world.

No wonder, then, that after the *Reichstag* fire (27 February 1933), when the Nazis started to

[1] *German Writers in Soviet Exile 1933–1945*. By DAVID PIKE. University of North Carolina Press, $29.50, £20.65. There is also an edition in the author's own German, especially useful for the original quotations from German-language sources: David Pike, *Deutsche Schriftsteller im sowjetischen Exil 1933–1945* (Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt).

[2] Bertolt Brecht, *Briefe*. Vol. I, *Letters*; Vol. II, *Notes*. Edited with a commentary by Günter Gläser (Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt, 1981).

[3] *Brecht in America*. By JAMES K. LYON. Princeton University Press, $31.50, £18.00.

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arrest and intern their opponents and the exodus of writers began, many entertained high hopes that there would be succour and guidance from the Soviet side. Brecht, for one, had hoped that the Soviet Union would seize the initiative to win over, politicise and radicalise the many leaderless liberal exiles as they scoured Prague and Vienna, Zurich and Amsterdam for places of residence and a stable livelihood. But no guidance or leadership was forthcoming from the Communist Party, or from the Soviet Union. Having found his own place of refuge in Denmark, Brecht wrote—on 28 June 1933—to his friend, the Communist poet (and ex-Expressionist avant-gardist) Johannes R. Becher, that having been to Prague, Vienna, Zurich, Paris and Lugano he had

". . . encountered everywhere the strongest possible lack of courage, the highest degree of confusion. Separated from the proletariat, more and more preoccupied with earning their barest living (which is possible only by making compromises in all essential matters) and, in addition, dispersed over a number of far distant cities, the proletarian writers will have the greatest difficulty in continuing their revolutionary activity. Already they are planning harmless children's books, 'camouflaged' novels for bourgeois publishers, kitschy films for bourgeois companies, etc.

The Left bourgeois writers, in general, are accommodating themselves to a *lengthy* period of exile, and even, perhaps, try to look into the

Besuch bei den Verbannten Dichtern

Als er im Traum die Hütte betrat der verbannten
Dichter, die neben der Hütte gelegen ist
Wo die verbannten Lehrer wohnen (er hörte von dort
Streit und Gelächter), kam ihm zum Eingang
Ovid entgegen und sagte ihm halblaut:
»Besser, du setzt dich noch nicht. Du bist noch nicht
gestorben. Wer weiß da
Ob du nicht doch noch zurückkehrst? Und ohne daß
andres sich ändert
Als du selber.« Doch, Trost in den Augen
Näherte Po Chü-yi sich und sagte lächelnd: »Die
Strenge
Hat sich jeder verdient, der nur einmal das Unrecht
benannte.«
Und sein Freund Tu-fu sagte still: »Du verstehst, die
Verbannung
Ist nicht der Ort, wo der Hochmut verlernt wird.« Aber
irdischer
Stellte sich der zerlumpte Villon zu ihnen und fragte:
»Wie viele
Türen hat das Haus, wo du wohnst?« Und es nahm ihn
der Dante bei Seite
Und ihn am Ärmel fassend, murmelte er: »Deine Verse
Wimmeln von Fehlern, Freund, bedenk doch
Wer alles gegen dich ist!« Und Voltaire rief hinüber:
»Gib auf den Sou acht, sie hungern dich aus sonst!«
»Und misch Späße hinein!« schrie Heine. »Das hilft
nicht«
Schimpfte der Shakespeare, »als Jakob kam
Durfte auch ich nicht mehr schreiben.«—» Wenn's zum
Prozeß kommt
Nimm einen Schurken zum Anwalt!« riet der Euripides
»Denn der kennt die Löcher im Netz des Gesetzes.« Das
Gelächter
Dauerte noch, da, aus der dunkelsten Ecke
Kam ein Ruf: »Du, wissen sie auch
Deine Verse auswendig? Und die sie wissen
Werden sie der Verfolgung entrinnen?« «—» Das
Sind die Vergessenen«, sagte der Dante leise
»Ihnen wurden nicht nur die Körper, auch die Werke-
vernichtet.«
Das Gelächter brach ab. Keiner wagte hinüberzublicken.
Der Ankömmling
War erblaßt.

Visit to the Exiled Poets

When, in his dream, he entered the hut of the exiled
poets, which lies next to the hut
where the exiled philosophers stay (from there he heard
disputation and laughter), at the entrance
Ovid met him and said, half-whispering:
"Better not sit down yet. You're not yet dead. Who
knows whether you won't get back there? Without
anything having changed
except yourself." But with consoling eyes
Po-chü-yi approached him and said with a smile:
"Severe castigation
has been well earned by anyone who spoke out against
injustice"
and Tu-fu, his friend, said softly: "You understand,
exile
is not a place where people are cured of conceit." But,
earthier,
Villon in rags stood by them and asked: "How many
doors has the house you live in?" And Dante took him
aside
and, tugging him by the sleeve, murmured: "Your verses
are full of mistakes, friend, just think
how many people dislike you!" And Voltaire called
across
"Mind your pennies, or they'll starve you to death!"
"And mix in some jokes!" cried Heine. "That doesn't
help"
grumbled Shakespeare, "When James became King
I too was banned from writing"— "If they take you to
court
take a crook for your lawyer!", Euripides counselled,
"He'll know the loopholes of the law." They were still
laughing
when, from the darkest corner,
there came a cry: "You there, tell us, do they know
your poems by heart? And those who know them
will they escape persecution?" — "Those
are the forgotten ones", said Dante softly,
"Not only their bodies, their works too were destroyed."
The laughter broke off. No one dared to look. The new-
comer
had turned pale.

Bertolt Brecht
(Translated by Martin Esslin)

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possibility of a return. They lack a standpoint for a struggle against fascism. We do not give them such a standpoint by merely, from time to time, borrowing their names. And yet it is precisely the fact that they, at least in some cases, feel their lack of a standpoint and are aware of their defencelessness, that would give us a real chance with them; a chance that will only exist for a very short span of time, however."

Many of the Communist writers who had always regarded the Soviet Union as "the homeland of all true socialists" hoped that they would be given refuge and a livelihood there. But it soon became clear that entry visas into that citadel of anti-fascism were as hard to obtain as visas to the many other countries that were, at the time, arguing that mass unemployment and the world depression made it difficult for them to receive large numbers of fugitives looking for work.

David Pike quotes an article in *Die Neue Weltbühne* (the successor of Berlin's leading left-wing weekly that had established itself in Prague) that asked in blunt terms why, in the Soviet Union, "space could not be found for several thousands whose lives and liberty have yet to be saved from the grasp of fascism. . . ." The challenge provoked an answer from a correspondent signing himself *A Friend of the Soviets* which argued that the Soviet leaders

". . . loathe fascism no less than we; but they require German machines for socialist construction. And above all else—and this is wholly in the interest of us all—they need a secure peace; that is why they must retain good relations with their big and menacing neighbour in the West, even if their temperament actually compels them in the other direction. Such motives of *Realpolitik*, not sentimentalities, are decisive."

Thus the Soviet Union was far more illiberal in its attitude to refugees, political as well as racial, from Nazi Germany than some of the Western countries that have often been accused of barring such fugitives or making it difficult for them to obtain visas. Certainly Austria and Czechoslovakia (to name but two neighbours of Hitler's Germany far more dependent on Hitler's good will) admitted many thousands of refugees, as did Holland, France and the Scandinavian countries. Brecht, after all, settled in Denmark without much difficulty, having had a chance of sampling conditions in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, France, and England.

Yet at the same time German technicians and "specialists" were being vigorously recruited from Germany by the Soviet Union. Left-wing refugees were felt to be more useful in the "capitalist" countries, where they would be a disruptive and subversive influence. In 1934, David Pike reports, Elena Stassova, the general secretary of the International Red Relief (the organisation supposed to help Left-wing refugees) told a representative of the League for Human Rights that "what mattered most was not sanctuary in the USSR but 'prying the right of asylum' from the 'capitalist countries'. . . ."

NEVERTHELESS, important functionaries, including a number of writers, were ordered to report to the Soviet Union where they were given various tasks in the propaganda apparatus, the administration of writers' unions, the organisation of international congresses, etc. After the official line changed to advocacy of a "Popular Front" of all anti-Nazi forces, these German writer-functionaries (like Johannes R. Becher who later became Minister of Culture in the *DDR*) assumed increasing importance. But even then Communist intellectuals who were actually needed in these enterprises often had great difficulty in obtaining the necessary visas (and travel expenses) to make their way to the Soviet Union.

Those who succeeded in finding sanctuary in the Soviet Union were under considerable pressure to take Soviet citizenship. If they succumbed they did not have to renew their residence permits, and were freed from various other restrictions. Later, after the start of Stalin's wave of terror, the decision to opt for Soviet nationality proved fatal to many of these intellectuals. Those who had hesitated, and retained their German passports, risked being deported, while Soviet citizens were treated as traitors, and often put to death.

Pike documents the victims of the Stalin terror among German writers, journalists, and actors and the list is long and tragic: Herwarth Walden (editor of Berlin's leading Expressionist magazine); Vali Adler (the daughter of the psychoanalyst Alfred Adler); Hans Günther (a leading Communist theoretician who had written an influential book about Nazi ideology and was arrested as a spy because to write it he had acquired Nazi publications); Heinz Neumann (whose work as a Comintern agent in China had inspired Brecht's masterpiece *Die Massnahme*); and many of Brecht's friends, German as well as Russian. Among them were one of Brecht's closest associates during his emigration in Switzerland, the avant-garde novelist Ernst Ottwalt, and his wife, Waltraut Nicolas; his Soviet mentor who had translated some of his early plays, the Russian writer Sergei Tretyakov; and one of the great loves of Brecht's life, the actress Carola Neher, immortal as the Polly of G. W. Pabst's *Threepenny Opera* film.

CONFRONTATION with the realities of the Stalinist terror presented a convinced Marxist and supporter of the Soviet party line with a des-

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perate challenge. Brecht's letters show only too well to what lengths he went in trying to force himself to accept what was happening as just and inevitable. In a man of his high intelligence this amounted to a kind of mental suicide, a *sacrificium intellectus*; and his letters show that he was only too well aware of it.

In the early years of his emigration, Brecht had shared various lodgings with Waltraut Nicolas and Ernest Ottwalt. Ottwalt had gone to the Soviet Union; in November 1936 he was arrested. Brecht must have heard of this very soon after, yet three months later, at the beginning of February 1937, he was writing to Bernard von Brentano, another friend who had begun to be disillusioned with Communism:

> "I have heard that Ottwalt is said to have been arrested, but absolutely nothing apart from that. And even this item of news comes exclusively from bourgeois newspapers. I myself have not been in contact with him for years. As far as I am concerned I still regard the Bolshevik party as deeply anchored in the Russian proletariat and feel that the Russian economy is engaged in a great revolutionary development. . . ."

In other words: "let us hope the news about the arrest of one my best friends is false, but if it is not I still think the revolutionary events in Russia are more important than the extinction of an innocent life. . . ."

When the person involved was somebody much closer to him than merely a fellow-writer who had been on his side in the struggle for avant-garde literature against the Party philistines, Brecht's contortions became even more painful. One such person was the actress Carola Neher, with whom he had had a long and torrid affair in Berlin, until she fell in love with a Soviet diplomat, became a fervent Communist, and emigrated to the Soviet Union with her husband. At the height of the Stalin terror Neher was arrested. Brecht's friend and collaborator from his Munich days, the successful novelist Lion Feuchtwanger, had been invited to the Soviet Union to counter the bad impression that André Gide's denunciation of the lack of freedom in the country had made among Western intellectuals. Feuchtwanger, who after his return to France duly delivered a book praising the fairness of the Moscow trials, was known to be in favour in high places and to have been received by Stalin in person. In May 1937 Brecht wrote to him:

> ". . . by the way: could you do something for Neher who is said to be under arrest in Moscow; I don't, however, know what for; but I don't regard her as a person who would represent a particular threat to the continued existence of the Soviet Union. Perhaps she slid into it by some woman's affair. In any case she is a human being not without some value and I don't know whether you know that over there she did not have a real chance to show what she could do. If you could ask about her, it would do her a lot of good. I myself have been unable to obtain an answer to my questions from anyone, which is something I do not at all appreciate. . . ."

There is anguish in this letter as well as irony. One senses the degree of anger that lurks behind the show of party loyalty, as well as the fear of getting into trouble himself. A few weeks later, in June 1937, Brecht renewed his pleas to Feuchtwanger:

> "Dear Doctor, do you see any possibility of inquiring about Neher in Stalin's secretariat? In the course of the most justified activity now being undertaken in the USSR to counteract Goebbels' organisations, naturally, at times, mistakes might be made. You know that Gorki has intervened for artists and scientists at times. If Neher really took part in treasonable activities we cannot help her; but perhaps by drawing attention to her great artistic talent one might succeed in speeding up proceedings and have her case cleared up separately (which, in view of the reputation she enjoys in Germany, Czechoslovakia and Switzerland would be useful for the Soviet Union as well). A simple (not public) inquiry might merely underline her artistic significance without complicating the work of the organs of justice. It would, however, be important for me if you treated this request of mine with the utmost confidentiality as I neither want to engender any suspicion against the practices of the Soviet Union nor would wish to give certain people an opportunity to state such a thing about me. . . ."

Thus did Brecht try to make his way through a veritable minefield of conflicting considerations: the desire to help his former mistress as against his fear of being seen to doubt the justice of the authorities in a case in which he knew that they were wrong—and as against the even greater fear that somebody might hear about his attempts to interfere in Soviet justice and use this fact to discredit him with the Stalinist establishment.

Of course, Feuchtwanger's intervention, which without doubt he faithfully undertook, was fruitless. At the end of November, long after Feuchtwanger had returned to France, Brecht tried to enlist his help again:

> ". . . what can we really do for poor C[arola] N[eher]? I don't know whether K., when he gets back, can do anything for her, arriving from abroad and very busy. Perhaps you might, after all, consider sending a telegram? If she has been

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found guilty, that certainly would not have happened without ample documentation of her offence; but over there they don't have the view that 'one pound of crime' deserves 'one pound of punishment'; they merely want to protect the Soviet state; in that case non-Russians might be simply expelled? She is still a valuable human being, a great actress. Scientists who have been guilty (like Ramsin), have, with justification, been given an opportunity to continue their work. That can't be done with N. over there as she does not act in Russian. But we could do it. . . ."

So Brecht clung, in desperation, to a continued belief in the early Bolshevik propaganda line that in the Soviet Union criminals were not really punished but were cured of their social disease—an idealistic concept that had been buried almost immediately in the horrors of the civil war and forced collectivisation.

IT IS AN ADDITIONAL and particularly cruel irony that the high Party functionary, Mikhail Koltsov, the K. of Brecht's letter (an editor of *Pravda* and a high official of the Writers' Union who had been in charge of foreign writers), was himself arrested after his return to the Soviet Union from France and Spain, and was never heard of again. Brecht had greatly appreciated his assistance during his brief visits to the Soviet Union in earlier years, and was also on friendly terms with Koltsov's common-law wife, Maria Osten, a German who at that time ran the Paris office of the literary journal *Das Wort*. (It had been started in Moscow to propagate the literary Popular Front, and Brecht—in Denmark—and Feuchtwanger—in France—were absentee editors.) At the end of 1938 or the beginning of 1939, Brecht was writing an alarmed letter to Maria Osten:

"Dear Maria, your lines about Koltsov have greatly frightened me. I had not heard anything. Now it is said that rumours about his having been arrested had appeared in the papers in Copenhagen. I very much hope these rumours will not be confirmed. Please let me know if you learn anything more precise, or anything whatever. I simply cannot imagine what he could have done. I have always regarded him as an indefatigable worker for the Soviet Union. Have you any idea what he is being accused of?"

Maria Osten, still in Paris, wanted to return to the Soviet Union to be of whatever assistance she could to Koltsov. David Pike has reconstructed what happened when she arrived at the home of her—and Koltsov's—adopted son, Hubert Lohtse (they had taken him under their wing when they were in the Saar during the plebiscite campaign of 1935). Osten and Koltsov had been greatly praised in the Soviet press for what they had done for the child of poor mine-workers in the Saar, and had even published a book about his reaction to the Soviet paradise entitled *Hubert in Wonderland*. As Osten stood at the door of Hubert's flat accompanied by another adopted son José, a five-year-old Spanish war-orphan, Hubert and his young wife

". . . refused to let them in. There were [Hubert] told Osten, social interests that over-shadowed the private interests of a 'Komsomol member', and he did not intend to besmirch his name. Hubert's wife then spoke up, telling Osten that personally they respected her, but they had 'just begun to live.' In other words, Hubert refused to have anything to do with his mother because of her connection with the arrested Koltsov."

BRECHT PASSED THROUGH the Soviet Union in May 1941, on his way to Vladivostok where he caught the last boat to California before the Germans invaded the Soviet Union. Maria Osten was among his closest associates during his stay in Moscow. Brecht's party, consisting of his wife, his secretary and mistress Margarete Steffin, his other mistress, the actress Ruth Berlau, and his two children, had to interrupt their journey because Steffin, gravely ill with tuberculosis, had had a collapse. Eventually, when Steffin failed to improve, they left her behind in hospital, in the care of Maria Osten.

On 30 May 1941, on the eve of his departure from Moscow, Brecht left instructions with a high Soviet official of the writers' union, Mikhail Apletin:

". . . should comrade Steffin die, I should ask you for the following:

1) to pass on to me her documents and a death certificate.
2) to keep the manuscripts (sealed and unsealed) and the photographs and letters in her possession for me.
3) to pass to me the money which I have merely borrowed for her.
4) to take from her luggage the little figures and elephants as well as the travelling chess set and to keep them for me. Everything else could be taken over by comrade Maria Osten and distributed by her.
5) to deposit anything left over from the sum in roubles that I am leaving behind in Lion Feuchtwanger's savings account.
6) Maria Osten has promised to have a plaster-cast made of Steffin's face, should she die. Please keep that for me. . . ."

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Pike takes up the story:

> "On 5 June Osten telegraphed Brecht the news of Steffin's death and was probably arrested before the month was out. She had recently taken Soviet citizenship, which may have sealed her doom. But when she was arrested and when she died is unknown. Nor is it clear what became of José. . ."

Carola Neher also perished in the Soviet Union, in spite of Brecht's and Feuchtwanger's efforts to help her. Here too Pike supplies the facts:

> ". . . Neher was arrested and accused of carrying messages to Moscow for the 'Trotskyist' Wollenberg. She was sentenced to ten years in prison. While still in the Lubjanka, she had opened her veins in an attempt to kill herself. During her imprisonment she was tortured by being stuck in an isolator, was half-starved to death and had a bout of typhus."

In prison, Neher met Evgenia Ginzburg, who has left a description of her in her celebrated book of reminiscences (*Into the Whirlwind*):

> "I immediately recognized the German film-star . . . the one who had hidden her gold rings in her hair during the first memorable search at Butyrki. She had changed greatly since then. The gold of her hair had lost its lustre, and pathetic little wrinkles showed at the corners of the mouth. Yet she was even more fascinating than before. Her face was ivory-white, without the faintest trace of colour. She had a childlike smile and sad, amber-coloured eyes."

After the Hitler-Stalin pact many of the German *émigrés* who had been arrested in the purges were handed over to the Gestapo. Margarete Buber-Neumann, the wife of the underground agent whose experiences in China Brecht had used in *Die Massnahme*, was one of these. But Carola Neher was not among them. Pike reports:

> ". . . an attempt was made to recruit Carola Neher for the NKVD but she refused. She was not repatriated and Buber-Neumann was the last one to see her. She was reportedly shot on 28 June 1942."

In a footnote Pike adds:

> "Neher's husband [the Soviet diplomat she had met in Berlin] was shot as early as 1937. In 1968 Carola Neher's son, Georg Becker, was located in Odessa, unaware until then of who his mother was. After the arrest of his parents in 1936, Becker was taken care of by a German couple, but they failed to escape the purges either. Hermann Taubenberg was shot in the thirties, and his wife Else was banished to Siberia. Only in 1972 was she allowed to leave Russia for West Germany, where she died a few months later. In 1975 Georg Becker was allowed to leave the USSR. Shortly before her arrest in Moscow the Prague *Arbeiter-Illustrirte Zeitung* carried a picture of Carola Neher and her son with this caption: 'I had long wished to have a child, but over there I didn't have the courage; only in the USSR could I see my wish fulfilled'. . . ."

That Brecht was aware of the nature of the terror that destroyed some of his closest associates is abundantly clear from his correspondence. All the more remarkable is the doggedness with which he clung to an attitude of at least outward loyalty, vigorously defending Stalin and his régime to the outside world. One German Communist (who succeeded in extricating himself from the Soviet Union before the terror caught up with him) told me that when Brecht was approached to sign a petition to Stalin on behalf of Carola Neher, he indignantly refused. In the light of the letters now published, we can see why. He was afraid that a signature in black and white would brand him as publicly disapproving of an action of the Soviet authorities and also that it might weaken the steps he had initiated behind the scenes, *via* Feuchtwanger, directly to Stalin.

In addition one could never be certain whether the people collecting the signatures were not, in fact, *agents provocateurs* or secret police informers. David Pike's book contains a number of hair-raising stories of mutual accusations and counter-accusations, denunciations, and accusations about denunciations among the *émigré* writers and journalists in the Soviet Union. Each time one of them was arrested, the question of *who* had denounced him (and what for) emerged in the minds of those who had been associated with the victim. A bad review of someone's book years earlier might turn out to be the cause of a denunciation now. There had always been heated controversies on Marxist aesthetics, as well as on propaganda tactics, and motivations of this kind were only too abundantly available.

While still in Berlin Brecht had been in the thick of these conflicts. Alfred Kurella, an influential Party functionary who in 1930 had violently attacked *Die Massnahme*, Brecht's great oratorio about party discipline, now occupied an important position in the organisation of *émigré* writers in the Soviet Union; he was one of the editors of its organ *Internationale Literatur* (the German-language version of a literary journal that appeared in all the main languages). When the Comintern line changed to a "Popular Front" policy in the course of 1935, it was felt that this

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orthodox literary periodical should be supplemented by a German-language publication of a wider, less openly Party-line tendency. This journal, *Das Wort*, was launched at the beginning of 1936; its first issue appeared (with considerable delays owing to technical and bureaucratic problems of all kinds) on 21 July. The place of publication and the location of its editorial offices was Moscow, but of the three editors-in-chief whose names appeared on its masthead only one, Willi Bredel, actually lived there. The others, Brecht and Feuchtwanger, remained respectively in Denmark and the south of France.

Brecht, it seems, did not receive a regular salary for his work, but could count on his own contributions being paid for in hard currency, with occasional sums to cover expenses for postage and secretarial help. From the very beginning the editorial process was involved and difficult. Brecht wanted the right to approve and reject contributions; in practice, however, it mostly boiled down to his being able to forward articles that he wanted published, and often even these were ultimately rejected for reasons of internal Soviet and Party policies. When his friend Bernard von Brentano complained about a savage attack on one of his books in a review in *Das Wort*, Brecht replied, in March 1937:

> "The unfortunate review in the first number of *Das Wort* only came to my notice when I got a glimpse of the issue in a London bookshop. It was among the things that made me very angry—among them also the printing of an opera by that swine Kerr [the Berlin critic Alfred Kerr, who had been Brecht's main opponent in his Berlin days]. The situation is that, in view of my distance from it, it is easier for me to get something into *Das Wort* than to keep something out."

On the other hand, Bredel, the editor on-the-spot in Moscow, resented being treated as no more than a mail clerk by the more prominent editors. Maria Osten (who, at that time, frequently visited Brecht in Denmark and acted as a kind of courier between him and Bredel) was told quite bluntly (in July 1936):

> ". . . you pass along directives: print this immediately—Bredel should read it. Period. Matter closed. In another letter I read: should be published. Brecht says so. Period. End. Can you have forgotten on your trip that I am an editor too and not just an executive organ (to avoid a stronger expression)?"

Eventually Bredel gave up. He went to France and later to Spain where he played a part in the Civil War. His place was taken by Fritz Erpenbeck, a minor Party employee, who later rose to some prominence in the *DDR*.

CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS were made by all concerned to persuade the more prominent members of the German literary emigration to contribute to *Das Wort*. Heinrich Mann was assiduously wooed by all concerned. But although he was far more in sympathy with the Communist Party-line than his brother Thomas, he too refused to contribute—probably because, when approached to act as one of the editors early in 1936, he had asked for a regular salary and had been told that that was impossible.

THE OPENING of the Moscow show trials, a month after the first issue of *Das Wort* appeared, also made it difficult to attract the desired range of contributors. One early episode centred round a review of Ignazio Silone's novel *Bread and Wine*. Ernst Ottwalt was asked to attack it in a review, but Brecht

> ". . . opposed any kind of polemic with Silone; and Maria Osten, in a letter to Moscow, promised an 'uproar' if Ottwalt's criticism was published. By the time Osten's letter reached the Soviet Union, however, Ottwalt had already written Silone a private letter, and the latter had agreed to reply; both letters would then be printed in *Das Wort*."

But before Silone could write his reply the Moscow Trials had started. Silone no longer felt it permissible to be published by a Moscow-based journal. Instead he published an open letter to *Das Wort* in a Swiss paper, castigating the blatant untruth of the accusations levelled against men like Trotsky, Bukharin, and Radek. He pointed out that the methods used by the Stalin terror were identical with those of the Fascists and Nazis to whom he had so long been actively opposed, and "refused to become a Fascist, not even a red Fascist. . . ." Silone's statement (published in Basle on 24 September 1936) greatly embarrassed the editors of *Das Wort*. Ernst Bloch, the brilliant, kindly and idealistic fellow-travelling philosopher, then in Prague, was asked to compose a reply. He did so, but his article failed to appear. To inquiries by friends of Bloch in Prague, Bredel had to reply, on 4 January 1937:

> "Something stupid came up in connection with Bloch. He quoted too much, and that is not acceptable here; but I don't know how to explain that to him. . . ."

In November 1936 Ottwalt and Hans Günther were arrested. Their names disappeared from the list of contributors on the back cover of the journal. And subtle people abroad noticed these omissions.

So great were the practical difficulties in marketing the periodical and over the transmission of manuscripts to Moscow that by the end of 1937

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Feuchtwanger and Brecht presented an ultimatum. They would resign as editors unless something drastic was done. As a result a Paris office was set up for *Das Wort*, with Maria Osten as the local editorial assistant.

Brecht's difficulties with the paper also had a more basic aspect. From the autumn of 1937, when Klaus Mann published an article attacking the leading Expressionist poet Gottfried Benn for his support of Nazism, *Das Wort* became the forum for what has since become known as the great "Expressionism Debate", which in practice was no more than an attempt to make the German *émigré* writers toe the line of "socialist realism" as proclaimed by Stalin and his henchman in cultural matters, Andrei Zhdanov.

Among the German writers in exile the chief spokesman for this official line was (or appeared to be) Georg Lukács,[4] most prestigious of Marxist literary theorists and critics, who ardently admired the great 19th-century realists from Walter Scott to Balzac, and regarded Thomas Mann as the greatest of contemporary writers, in spite of being "bourgeois" to the core. This debate, carried out in terms of Marxist jargon and with endless quotations from Marx's and Engels's scanty references to literary aesthetics, boiled down to a very simple central point: avant-garde literature and experimentation were difficult to grasp by the masses, and therefore not very effective as propaganda. Even "realism", if carried too far in the description of the social realities in a country like the Soviet Union, would be counterproductive. Hence "socialist realism" must not only be traditional in its adherence to 19th-century standards of story-telling, but must also concentrate on the positive aspects of reality. It must be optimistic, life-affirming, see things not as they really looked ("excessive naturalism") but as they *ought* to look in an ideal socialist society. Thus the hyper-realistic and impressionistic "reportage" and documentary style of Soviet writers like Tretyakov and the expressionistic, somewhat surreal and fantastic experimentation of writers like Brecht were both proscribed.

FROM THE POINT OF VIEW of those who still tried to draw clear distinctions between fascism and communism—the two totalitarianisms—this campaign against the expressionist, surrealist and experimental elements in modern literature and arts coincided most unfortunately with Hitler's onslaught against precisely the same tendencies in his campaign against "degenerate art." Pike has unearthed in the archives of *Das Wort* a letter by Ernst Bloch which the philosopher—always an ardent admirer of Brecht—wrote to the editors of the journal inquiring whether their attacks on Expressionism had been written before or after Hitler's notorious onslaught against modernism at the opening of the Munich exhibition of "Degenerate Art." Again Nazism and Stalinism had become indistinguishable. Brecht was repeatedly invited to contribute to the debate in the journal of which he, after all, was nominally still an editor. With his usual caution he tried to avoid such a confrontation with the official line—and with the authorities.

In a letter to Willi Bredel, dating from the summer of 1938, he openly voiced his misgivings:

> "Regrettably working for *Das Wort* is becoming more and more problematic. The paper seems, more and more, to be veering towards a strange position, in which a small clique, apparently led by Lukács and Hay, is setting up a very specific ideal of literary form, which implies a condemnation of everything that does not conform to this ideal, based on principles derived from the bourgeois novelists of the last century. Thus the important fight against formalism is itself transformed into a kind of formalism: which is to say: everything is judged according to its form (which in this case happens to be an ancient one). In number seven of *Internationale Literatur*, indeed, Lukács is hitting out at me and throws me into the same pot with bourgeois decadence, and that at a time, when God knows we should have other worries than merely formal ones! From time to time I get a request from Erpenbeck to take part in this debate, but naturally I am not keen to do so, as I consider such debates most harmful and confusing, i.e. at this moment in time, when always at the end the opinion put forward by good old Lukács is praised as *the* only truly Marxist one (at least by Lukács himself). What good does it do to announce to the world that my description of the Third Reich is not in accordance with the facts (what else does it mean to say that it is not realistic?) and that my views are not socialist. . . . From *Das Wort* I always get material that has already been pre-selected and my objections are almost never taken into account. I can tell you, this cannot go on for long. And yet it is important to have this paper and it would be of the greatest importance to improve its quality. What can we do?"

ONE OF David Pike's most sensational discoveries in the archives of *Das Wort* in Moscow concerns the attempts by Fritz Erpenbeck and

[4] Lukács was, of course, Hungarian, and so was Julius Hay, the playwright who was a master of the traditionally structured well-made play; many of the Hungarian Communists who had emigrated to Berlin after the collapse of Bela Kun's Hungarian Soviet Republic had become members of the German Communist Party.

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Alfred Kurella (who deputised for him while he was in the Crimea on holiday) to provoke Brecht not only to contribute an article to the debate, but also, by doing so, to expose himself to official condemnation by the Party. For one of the forthcoming issues of *Das Wort* Lukács had written an article in which he violently attacked Brecht's close friend, the composer Hanns Eisler, as well as Bloch for their stand in the defence of expressionism. Brecht, to whom Lukács's article had been sent for his editorial approval, objected violently to its publication. On 8 June 1938 Kurella wrote to Erpenbeck:

> "In haste, a new interlude: the enclosed letter from Brecht has just arrived. Tahu-tata! Now the cat sticks its head out of the bag. Particularly in the postscriptum. (Incidentally: you had a good nose when you asked Lukács to soften the Eisler passage.). . . . But to the point. . . . I think we have to give in, from formal considerations. Formally he is correct that articles can appear in the journal in the name of the editorial board only if none of the editors have any objections. . . . I hope you agree. I'll give a copy of the letter to Walter [i.e. Walter Ulbricht] and will also speak with him and see how we should react. The crux of the matter is: at any rate he is now so 'stimulated' that he'll certainly write. And that is a gain, in any event. How nicely the links we have long suspected backstage are now revealing themselves. Of course the Bloch-Eisler campaign (for that is what it was) did not spring from their empty bellies."

The hoots of joy so onomatopoeically expressed at the start thus concerned the uncovering of Brecht's presence backstage as the instigator of the campaign against the official "socialist realist" line. The letter also clearly shows that Ulbricht, the official authority of the Party, had to be consulted in such matters. And what was the outcome of his intervention? Lukács's article, to which Brecht had so strenuously objected, *did* appear in the next number of the journal—in spite of Brecht's acknowledged absolute right as one of the editors to veto any publication he disapproved of.

Brecht *did* write an article, "*Volkstuemlichkeit und Realismus*" (*Volkstuemlichkeit* means "popularity" but also can mean "Folksiness" in the sense used by the Nazis), which gives constant lightly-veiled hints that "socialist realism" has affinities with the Nazi ideal of nationalistic folk art; but it never appeared in *Das Wort*. Another theoretical article, "On Rhymeless Poetry in Free Rhythms", which opposes the official line only by implication (Becher and his ilk had gone back to traditional rhymes and rhythms in producing pseudo-folk songs for the Party), *did* appear in the issue for March 1939. But this proved to be the last issue of the journal. After Mikhail Koltsov's disappearance (he had been the patron of the paper in the higher regions of the Soviet Party) and the start of preparations by Stalin and Molotov for a pact with Hitler, an anti-Nazi cultural publication of this type had become an embarrassment. On 31 March 1939 the three editors were curtly informed that the journal would be merged with *Internationale Literatur* because the occupation of Prague had made its distribution too difficult.

BRECHT was, as could well be imagined, furious. A number of his contributions had been accepted for future numbers (among them lengthy instalments of a translation of the famous Danish socialist writer Martin Andersen-Nexø's memoirs, which he had undertaken jointly with Margarete Steffin as a bread-and-butter job). He felt that these contributions must be paid for particularly as *Internationale Literatur* was now officially merged with *Das Wort* and had become its natural heir and successor. But the payment he received was merely for what had actually been printed in the last number of the defunct journal. On 25 July 1939 Brecht wrote to Erpenbeck from Sweden (where he had moved from Denmark):

> "Your account for my contributions to number 3 of *Das Wort*. . . I find astonishing: 180 Kroner! Originally it was said that accepted (and commissioned) work would in any case be paid, and, if at all possible, also printed. As regards the publication of Nexoe's memoirs, it must be left to IL to decide about that. Of course, I can see that a periodical would find it difficult to publish, simultaneously, several long epic works in instalments. But that we (and presumably Nexoe too?) should be paid not for the whole work but merely the miserable few opening pages and that by that they want to be rid of all obligations to us, that is about the shabbiest treatment I have experienced from any periodical in fifteen years of activity as a writer. You know under what difficult conditions we are at present working abroad and I cannot believe that you have properly brought this to the notice of the authorities; for it seems to me quite impossible that any official body in the Soviet Union could have acted in this manner in a matter of cultural policy if it had been properly informed. Is it really necessary to follow up the rude and provocative manner in which the editors were 'informed' of the liquidation of the journal (and Feuchtwanger has written me a very indignant letter about it) with this shabby and unworthy settlement of the financial side of things? You have the absolute duty to inform the comrades responsible about it, seriously. (Did you ever tell them that the memoirs had

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been *accepted* by *Das Wort*?). I will forego the question why I received so much less payment for my contributions lately than for previous ones; but even the reimbursement for my expenses for postage, typing etc. that I received each year seems to have become unobtainable. You didn't even find this worth mentioning. . . ."

BY THIS TIME the situation of the German *émigré* writers and intellectuals in the Soviet Union had become very precarious indeed. Few escaped arrest, many disappeared for ever; others, among them Brecht's close friend and collaborator Bernhard Reich, only emerged years later from camps and Siberian exile; and all, without exception, lived in constant fear of the early morning visit by the secret police. Even Georg Lukács was arrested and spent more than two months in prison (for reasons that have never become clear, probably a mix-up with someone of a similar name). Many were handed over to the Gestapo after the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, died in Hitler's concentration camps to which they were immediately transferred, or were released somewhere in Poland, only to perish in the Holocaust a few months later.

Brecht, as his correspondence shows only too clearly, knew all about the situation. By November 1937 he had already told his friend, the dissident German Communist Karl Korsch:

> "Since Tretyakov has been arrested (I believe as a Japanese spy) my literary connections with the Soviet Union have beome very tenuous. . . ."

And having moved from Denmark, more and more threatened by invasion, to Sweden, and then to Finland, Brecht became anxious to leave Europe altogether. He made every effort to move to the United States. For this he enlisted the help of another Marxist theatre-personality who had tried his luck in the Soviet Union and had been disappointed: Erwin Piscator, the avant-garde director. In May 1940 he told Piscator, who was hoping to get him a teaching position with the New School of Social Research (where Piscator was running a "theatre workshop"):

> "I think at present the USA is one of the few countries where one can still work freely as a writer. . . ."

It was with the help of Piscator, who obtained a lecturership at the New School for him (which, in fact, he never took up), that Brecht finally succeeded in getting a US visa from the American consul in Helsinki. By one of the supreme ironies of fate the only way Brecht's party could still get to America in the spring of 1941 was by catching a boat at Vladivostok. That is why Brecht had to cross the entire Soviet Union—with a halt in Moscow because of Margarete Steffin's collapse—to catch the last boat to the American West coast before the Germans invaded Soviet Russia.

BRECHT had already spent some time in America, at the beginning of his exile. He had gone to New York to oversee a production of his play *The Mother* by the Communist-controlled Theatre Union in 1935. He had been appalled by the Stanislavskian naturalism that dominated the American left-wing stage, had made himself highly unpopular with the producers, and eventually had been barred from rehearsals. So he had no illusions concerning the chances he had on US stages.

Having arrived at San Pedro, the port of Los Angeles, Brecht decided to try his luck in the film industry, where he had numerous friends and contacts. Quite a number of German actors, script-writers, and directors were already settled in Hollywood when Hitler came to power, and many others had succeeded in finding work and recognition after 1933: Ernst Lubitsch, Fritz Lang, William Dieterle, Berthold Viertel (portrayed by Christopher Isherwood in his novel *Prater Violet*) and Viertel's wife Salka (who had become confidante and principal script-writer for Greta Garbo), Peter Lorre, Elisabeth Bergner, to name but a few of the more prominent. And Lion Feuchtwanger, who had escaped from France in 1940, had already established himself as a successful screen-writer. So Brecht settled in the film capital (renting a house, No. 817, 25th Street, in Santa Monica; he moved to a larger house, 1063 26th Street, in August 1942, which eventually he bought for $4,500).

James Lyon's book, based as it is on numerous interviews with people who met Brecht in the 1940s as well as on a number of written sources (including the FBI's agents' reports on Brecht that have now become available under the Freedom of Information Act), shows clearly that Brecht's reaction to the United States was that of a European intellectual appalled at the materialism, but, above all, at the lack of intellectual leadership in a society where to be a writer or actor carried no particular social prestige, and to have read the latest novel or sociological treatise was not a requirement for acceptance among a circle of "educated" (*gebildete*) human beings.

And, of course, European affairs were remote. In October 1942 Brecht wrote to his old friend and mentor Karl Korsch—a dissident Marxist who had been expelled from the German Communist Party:

> "One's intellectual isolation here is immense. Compared to H[ollywood] Svendborg [the small town in Denmark where he had lived before] is a world centre."

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In a letter to the poet H. R. Hays (who had signed an affidavit for him and was translating his poetry) he wrote:

> "I am here . . . as if in Tahiti, among palm trees and artists. It makes me nervous."

And some months later he noted in his journal:

> "I have the feeling of being like Francis of Assisi in an aquarium. Lenin at the *Prater* (or the *Oktoberfest*), or a chrysanthemum in a coalmine."

Which is to say: on the one hand he saw himself as someone immensely serious, concerned with the ultimate fate of the world, in an environment of utter triviality and cheap hedonism; on the other as a delicate sensibility (the chrysanthemum) in a milieu concerned with the grubbiest materialism. He felt oppressed by the low level of taste around him. "Cheap prettiness depraves everything", he noted in his journal. When his wife found some nice old furniture after their move to the larger house, he noted that there was after all a tradition of design in America: "splendid old tables with remarkable wood-working and copper spittoons that have been remade into lamps. . . . It seems evident that America once *was* a cultured nation. . . ."

The significant word here is *Kulturnation*, a term from the vocabulary of the German *Bildungsbürger* who divides the world into the cultured and the uncultured (i.e. *the barbarian* tribes). It is not without significance that the Nazis justified their extermination of the Jews on the grounds—proclaimed by men like Spengler or Gobineau—that they were incapable of producing genuine *Kultur*. To Brecht the Americans clearly were equally outside the circle of those societies that were able to produce "high culture." Hollywood to him became the place where high culture was being prostituted to Mammon. In one of his Hollywood Elegies (wittily translated by John Willett) he makes that point very clearly:

Beneath the green pepper trees
The musicians play the whore, two by two
With the writers. Bach
Has written a Strumpet Voluntary. Dante
wriggles
His shrivelled bottom.

Unter den gruenen Pfefferbäumen
Gehen die Musiker auf den Strich, zwei und zwei
Mit den Schreibern. Bach
Hat ein Strichquartett im Täschchen. Dante
schwenkt
Den dürren Hintern.

Yet one had to earn one's living. Brecht wrote innumerable film treatments and even succeeded in selling one of these, with the help of Fritz Lang, an old Berlin acquaintance and now a prominent film director in a Hollywood studio. The film *Hangmen Also Die* was made but Brecht's original scenario was rewritten. When his name did not appear as one of the writers of the screenplay, Brecht took the matter to arbitration with the Screenwriters' Guild, but he failed to establish his claim.

TWO DAYS AFTER Pearl Harbour Brecht offered his services to the US war effort. Writing to Archibald MacLeish on 9 December 1941, he said (the letter is in English):

> "After my odyssey I arrived with my family in this country last summer. I have received my first papers on the strength of an immigration visa. During the first few months I have been busy settling down. Now that this country is also at war, I am most anxious to do my bit fighting the Nazis, the world's scourge. . . . Knowing Germany as I do, I feel strongly that the psychological moment has come to broadcast from here right into Germany the truth which might easily act as an incentive to revolt in the approaching hour of despair. I am aware that such an undertaking could turn out a boomerang if not handled intelligently. I would gladly participate in such an effort. I think you know that I could be helpful."

From his refuge in Denmark Brecht had regularly contributed anti-Nazi poems and sketches to Moscow Radio. Now he wanted to do the same on Voice of America. But his application did not succeed. On the other hand, his mistress, the Danish actress Ruth Berlau (who had abandoned her career and her husband to follow him into exile), did get a job in the Danish service of Voice of America and moved to New York. This, in the following years, led to various lengthy visits by Brecht to the East Coast, and to a series of emotional crises with Berlau who claimed that Brecht had promised to leave his wife, Helene Weigel, when she decided to come with him. Berlau became pregnant by Brecht, lost her child, and had for a time to be confined in a sanatorium for psychiatric disorders. The few letters from the voluminous correspondence with her that have found their way into the edition of the letters—Brecht wrote to her almost every day for many years—show how fraught the situation was at times.

Ruth Berlau acted as a kind of agent for Brecht in New York. A number of projects he tried to promote there almost came off. *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* was written for the Austrian actress Luise Rainer, who had been an enormous success and had won an Oscar as the Chinese wife in the film version of Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth*. She wanted to exploit her success in roles with an

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Oriental touch and had asked Brecht to write a play for her. W. H. Auden had been induced to collaborate on the translation. But, in the end, the project to get the play on Broadway came to nothing. The story was very similar to that of a project that originally was to have been a musical play produced jointly with Kurt Weill, *Schweyk in the Second World War*. Here too there was much trouble with the translation, and squabbles with the American producers of the project. A production of Brecht's series of short sketches on life in Hitler's Germany, *The Private Life of the Master Race*, did get put on in New York, albeit off-Broadway. But here too there were great difficulties. Originally Erwin Piscator was to direct it, but his ideas clashed with Brecht's; and eventually Berthold Viertel was called in at the last minute to take over. By the time the play opened at the auditorium of City College on 23rd Street, Hitler had killed himself in the Berlin bunker, and the play had lost its *raison d'être*. It was not until 1947 that Brecht scored a success with one of his plays: *The Life of Galileo*, translated in collaboration with Charles Laughton, opened in Hollywood in the summer of 1947 under Joseph Losey's direction, and transferred to New York in the late autumn. But by the time the New York production opened Brecht had already left America.

IN HIS DEALINGS with American theatre people, Brecht—as James Lyon reports and amply documents—showed himself uncompromising to the point of arrogance. When Harold Clurman, the drama critic and stage director and one of the founders of the Group Theatre, offered to direct *Galileo* on Broadway, Brecht rudely rebuffed him.

> "Soon after Brecht came to New York in late September 1946 [Clurman] and Kazan visited him. . . . He hoped to persuade the dramatist to allow him to produce and direct the play, with Kazan as co-producer. Clurman recalls the ensuing conversation and how Brecht flatly turned him down: 'I assured Brecht of my enthusiasm for the play and fortified what was to be my plea by saying that whatever I failed to understand about its staging I would be happy to learn from him.'
>
> Brecht's response was a categorical: 'No!'
>
> 'I'd rather a circus director do it', he went on. 'You are a Stanislavsky man and cannot possibly understand how to approach my play.'
>
> At this I roared, 'My name is Clurman!'
>
> But he roared back, if possible, even louder. 'You don't understand, no one understands, even Piscator doesn't understand. . . . You'll try to get "atmosphere"; I don't want atmosphere. You will establish a "mood"; I don't want a mood.'
>
> I began to scream at the top of my voice: . . . 'Tell me what you are after, and I will follow your instructions'. . . . Kazan never uttered a word. . . ."

This episode which Lyon quotes from Clurman's memoirs shows that Brecht saw himself confronted by exactly the same type of artistic-ideological opposition that he had faced in the Soviet Union where Stanislavsky had been elevated by Stalin and Zhdanov to the position of official exemplar and lodestar of theatre. What Balzac, Walter Scott, and the 19th-century novel were for Lukács, Stanislavsky's naturalism became for the official line of "socialist realism" in the theatre. Ironically, through the influence of Russian anti-Bolshevik *émigré* actors, it was precisely Stanislavsky's aesthetics and methods of theatre which had become the pattern to be slavishly followed by American actors and directors. If Hitler's views on expressionism had been an exact replica of Stalin's, the establishment line in American "artistic" theatre (as against the musical and popular farce), curiously enough, also exactly echoed the official Soviet view.

Brecht's rudeness and arrogance, which struck so many of the American theatre people with whom he came into contact (and whose views Lyon has gathered), can be seen largely as an expression of his consternation at this state of affairs, and his contempt for the aesthetic views that he found. Added to this was scorn for the technical backwardness and poverty of repertoire of a commercially based theatre-system that lacked the lavish subsidies of the German cultural tradition. As Lyon remarks, "the large New York German refugee colony . . . never overcame its unmitigated contempt for American theatres based in part on valid complaints, in part on ignorance." Brecht had shown this attitude even at his first contact with the American theatre in 1935.

> "Manuel Gomez remembers him to have been 'enormously vain . . . enormously energetic, enormously stubborn, enormously sarcastic, enormously difficult.' Albert Maltz, who took umbrage at his 'contentious arrogance', openly admits that he came to loathe him as a person, in part because the stench of his unwashed body (Brecht disliked bathing) made it an ordeal to sit next to him. George Sklar compared Brecht to Hitler and perceived in him 'the same apopleptic indulgence, the same ranting and shrieking associated with the German dictator.' This would not be the first or last time someone would make this unflattering comparison. . . ."

Eric Bentley, one of Brecht's staunchest supporters and champions in America from the start, also had to experience a great deal of Brecht's bad temper, suspicion, and deviousness in matters of assigning translation rights to different people

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without telling them about his various changes of mind. A letter of Bentley's records this:

> "He has neither good manners nor elementary decency. He lives out his own theory that it is impossible to behave well in this society. . . . He is like Dubedat in *The Doctor's Dilemma*—a scoundrel but an artist."

W. H. Auden echoed this sentiment when he expressed the opinion that Brecht was "a remarkable writer but a most unpleasant man." It must be kept in mind, however, that Brecht deliberately fostered this image. He wanted to appear tough and uncompromising; he *wanted* to shock those he despised and rejected.

THERE IS THUS a curious parallel between Brecht's experience in his spiritual and ideological sojourn in the Soviet Union (as editor of *Das Wort* and Soviet front-man in the literary Popular Front in the mid-1930s) and the six years he lived in Hollywood and struggled to make his way on Broadway.

In both countries he encountered official (or "establishment") hostility to his avant-garde artistic ideas—and for much the same reasons. The American theatre—and even more so the California film industry—went in for sentimental *kitsch* because that did better at the box-office, while Stalin's Soviet Union rejected difficult and demanding avant-garde art because it remained incomprehensible to the masses and therefore was ineffective as morale-boosting propaganda—which is merely another way of saying that it was, in the Hollywood film-mogul's phrase, "box-office poison." In that specific respect, commercialism and the totalitarian state's desperate need for public approval are exactly analogous. To an intellectual avant-garde artist like Brecht, the taste represented by "good box-office"—or "good propaganda"—exemplified what he would call a philistine, middle-brow, petty-bourgeois, suburban type of sensibility: everything, in fact, that the intellectual avant-gardist finds most loathsome. The experimental pioneer of new sensibilities by his very nature must be, at least initially, an élitist. In Germany, where *Bildung* has always been an important status symbol, general public opinion tolerated this state of affairs. Even those who disliked "advanced" art accorded high status to the advanced artist. After all, it was its artists and philosophers (whom hardly anybody could understand) who enabled Germany to gain national prestige and European acceptance in the 18th and 19th centuries, while other major nations excelled in different pursuits (e.g. the acquisition of overseas empires).

In the Soviet Union this pattern held fast, in so far as artists and writers were indeed pampered by the régime. But when, after the first euphoria of orgies of avant-garde art, Stalin realised that it paid no dividends with the masses, these pampered artists were forced, by draconic measures of terror, to lower themselves to becoming mere tools of a middle-to-low-brow, philistine official aesthetic. In the United States commercial considerations automatically dictated a similar state of affairs. The writers of best-sellers and Broadway successes enjoyed as many privileges as their Soviet counterparts. The little difference was that in the Soviet Union the avant-garde writers (such as Brecht's friend Tretyakov) were shot, while in the United States they merely had to linger in Bohemian lofts on the Lower East Side or teach "creative writing" in colleges for a pittance. And while in the Soviet Union Brecht felt it wise not to publish his artistic views, in the United States he could be as rude and vocal as he liked.

BRECHT DESPISED the "cultural landscape" of the United States precisely because the country appeared to him (rightly perhaps) as a vast suburbia, with suburban tastes in furniture, houses, food and art. Brecht's "Marxism" was essentially a reaction against the lifestyle of the *Kleinbürger*, the petty bourgeois. He thought that the alternative was a truly "proletarian" culture, but his attitudes and pronouncements show only too clearly that what he *really* expressed, what really appeared to him as the ideal alternative, was in fact the very opposite of "proletarian"—namely, the élitist, avant-gardist position of the most advanced of the *Bildungsbürger*, the educated section of German society who earned their status through going to the theatre, reading the latest books and being *au fait* with the newest painting and sculpture. Brecht's attitude to America mirrors that of hundreds of other German intellectual refugees who could never come to terms with a country that lacked a National Theatre (not to mention literary cafés) and despised ill-paid unkempt intellectuals. That today the status of intellectuals has greatly altered in the United States, that there are now subsidised theatres and that the German type of *Bildungsbürger* (e.g. Henry Kissinger) can reach high positions in the power structure may in no small measure be one of the side-effects of the influx of German intellectuals of this kind in the 1930s and '40s.

Many of these German *émigrés* managed to come to terms with their new environment and, in the end, contributed to its gradual transformation in their image. Brecht wanted none of that. In a poem he wrote while still in Denmark in 1937, Brecht had objected to German refugees being labelled "*émigrés*":

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. . . émigrés
That means people who emigrated. But we
Did not emigrate, freely
Choosing another country. We did not emigrate
To a country, to stay there, perhaps forever.
No—we fled, Driven out we are. Exiles.
And no home, a place of exile, is the country to
be that took us in.

. . . Emigranten.
Das heisst doch Auswanderer. Aber wir
Wanderten doch nicht aus, nach freiem Ent-
schluss
Wählend ein anderes Land. Wanderten wir doch
auch nicht
Ein in ein Land, dort zu bleiben, womöglich für
immer.
Sondern wir flohen. Vertriebene sind wir, Ver-
bannte.
Und kein Heim, ein Exil soll das Land sein, das
uns da aufnahm.

Lyon quotes an FBI file on Brecht, dating from 1943, which refers to this poem.

> "It is believed that the substitution of the word 'exile' for 'emigration' is an indication that persons connected with Brecht do not consider themselves immigrants here, but look upon themselves rather as exiles who wait to return to Europe."

The FBI agent in this case got it right. Brecht hesitated for quite a long time before making arrangements to return to Europe. He did not relish the idea of living in a devastated Germany, and his correspondence shows that he was thinking of Switzerland, Northern Italy, Austria. And when finally, in 1948–49, he did decide to settle in East Berlin, he continued to press for Austrian citizenship, which he eventually obtained; so that he lived in East Germany as an *Ausländer*, a foreigner. (Perhaps he remembered that in the Soviet Union those who had acquired Soviet citizenship were shot, whereas foreigners had a chance of being deported.)

THE FATE OF the exiled poet is full of ironies. Brecht had spent fifteen years abroad, missing the theatrical life, the amenities, and the status accorded to an artist and intellectual in a country of *Bildungsbürger*; but the very experience of such a long time in the great world, with its vast vistas, made the much missed country of origin appear confined and petty once he returned. In one of his early diary entries after his homecoming to East Berlin, Brecht speaks of "the stinking breath of provincialism" that blew into his face during a reception at which he encountered some of the high officials of the East German régime.

Brecht left the United States in the autumn of 1947, the morning after he appeared before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in the film industry. He had been congratulated on being such a cooperative witness, but had given nothing away—by the simple ruse of pretending to be a foreigner whose English was simply not good enough to understand what the proceedings were all about. By another strange irony, six months after he had left the United States he received an award from the American Academy of Letters ($1,000, a substantial sum in 1948). On 5 April 1948 he wrote (in English) to the Chairman of the grants committee:

> "I thank you for the honor that you have accorded me. In a time like this such an award is especially encouraging. Unfortunately I will be unable to attend the annual ceremonial as I am at present living in Switzerland. . . . "

Back in East Germany Brecht, the Austrian citizen who had lodged the copyright of his works with a West German publisher, was plunged back into the war he had waged from Denmark, the fight against the Stalinist line in aesthetics in the Soviet

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Union. It was a hard struggle that had its ups and downs. He was forced to pay public tribute to Stanislavsky, and he had to endure much official criticism and censorship. Yet he remained loyal to the end.

But once an exile, always an exile. Back in Berlin, the city from which he had been driven into "emigration", Brecht never felt quite at home. In one of the last letters in the collected edition (dated December 1954, eighteen months before he died) Brecht thanks a friend for a gift of Bavarian beer, and sadly remarks that these bottles

> " . . . remind me of the fact that actually I am still living in exile, albeit a very voluntary one . . . . "

When one has tasted the bitter bread of strangers, known how hard it is to go up and down the stairs and streets of alien experience, exile becomes more than a mere physical fact: it becomes a permanent state of mind.

1943—A Personal View

The woman sees a giant straw
beyond the tree-line
drawing in a cloud
to reinflate the earth. A door

slams, she does not dare
think what the smoke means,
never to guess or tell the boy
when he learns to ask. Elsewhere

the father sees arrows embossed
home over versts of white and sees
his garden with the boy trampling
a senile stubble of hoar-frost.

Ice too in Lodz at the last,
the fecalists wheeling nightsoil
in cylinders that could be any coffin
bound for the cemetery past

earthmounds scraped and piled
as if safe as roofs above a flood.
So they come, a Rabbi pushing
a pram of books frail as the child

linked to a mother's womb
by its pretzel of flesh. *Next year*
in Jerusalem, his rebirth
from the European tomb. . . .

All this in *my* year, a fish sign
though father killed by the sea;
but now his enemies suffer and the day
free of any former hero seems mine:

in a world of violence my ego
comes to play its part, I spit
and shake a fist at the man
who'd dared to strike the blow.

David Sweetman

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Asa Briggs

The Environment of the City

NO REFLECTION ON the human odyssey, however sketchy or cursory, could leave out the city—the city as place of survival, often precarious, highly vulnerable survival; the city as centre of civilisation, or rather of richly varied civilisations in time and space; and, not least, the city as metaphor, with the metaphor itself twisting and turning through the centuries into old and new shapes.

The etymological fact that with the Western tradition the words "*city*" and "*civilisation*" have a common root, along with "*citizenship*" and "*civility*", points to the second of these aspects of the city as an influence in history—to something far more than survival, to the temple and the theatre rather than to walls or shelters, to the creativity of the individual and of the society, and to the enrichment of human culture. So also does the haunting preoccupation through the centuries with the "Ideal City", the city of dreams to which restless and striving men should aspire; and at this point, of course, fact turns into metaphor, the metaphor not only of the New Jerusalem but of Babylon.

Yet the first aspect of the city—as place of survival or destruction—also has its scaffolding of imagery: Venice under the sea, T. S. Eliot's tumbling of the towers. When Lewis Mumford, a leading 20th-century surveyor of cities, wrote his second massive book on the city, *The City in History*, 23 years after the first (*The Culture of Cities*, 1938)—with a World War and the Atomic Bomb in between—it was to the theme of the city as insecure citadel that he returned when pondering characteristically on the relationship between first and last things.

> "Urban life spans the historic space between the earliest burial ground for dawn man and the final cemetery, the Necropolis, in which one civilisation after another has met its end."

Science fiction takes over in the 20th century where history ends, often attempting a complete rewriting of history in the process. The city can become nightmare rather than dream as "civilised" relations crack. Yet the technology of the citadel can be strengthened. In one of his short stories, "Caves of Steel", Isaac Asimov envisaged 800 cities on earth with an average population of 10 millions.

> "Each city became a semi-autonomous unit economically all but self-sufficient. It could roof itself, gird itself about, burrow itself under. It became a steel cave, a tremendous self-contained cave of steel and concrete."

In other science fiction the city returns as symbol after disaster . . . in what Arthur C. Clarke has called appropriately "the Aeneas theme." As the hero in John Christopher's *The Death of Grass* goes out toward a new settlement, he says to the heroine, "There's a lot to do. A city to be built."

THE BUILDING, adaption and transformation of cities has been a major human achievement, providing us in the 20th century with a whole "prospect of cities", even the newest of them already historically layered. Paradoxically, destruction has often uncovered civilisation: thus, the bombing of London in World War II revealed Roman London for the first time. If the 20th century has changed skylines, the 19th century created a whole new city-network underground, a network of pipes and sewers, a technological triumph even greater than that of the Romans. We are constantly reviewing our assessments of the achievements of previous ages, not only contrasting present with past but finding in historic cities "similes and analogies for the contemporary architect and urban designer." Napoleon III thought of himself as a new Augustus. Nor is it only autocrats who turn back to the past. As a contemporary American architect said in 1980.

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> "When this new wave of architects comes out of the schools, with a sense of caring about context, it seems to me that cities are going to have the concern that you see in a place like Florence . . . some sense of continuity even with changing styles."

IT IS BECAUSE both city builders and city dwellers can compare one actual city with another actual city and not simply with the Ideal City, however envisaged, that time scales are as significant as the use of space in judging the appearance of cities. There were more 19th-century references to Florence as a particular "place of concern" than there have been 20th-century references. In Britain's industrial Birmingham, for example, "adventurous orators" in the 1860s would "dwell on the glories of Florence and of the other cities of Italy in the Middle Ages and express the hope that Birmingham too might become the home of noble literature and art. . . ." There was, indeed, a double framework of historical reference in the 19th century, with some city reformers and commentators looking back to the city states of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and some looking further back still to the city in the ancient world, the Greek *polis* and the Roman *civitas*. In each case, there was a strong sense not only of continuity—and of community—but of civic pride. At a time when the actual cities of a new industrial society were generally thought of as problem places, this pride was conspicuous. It was in the United States, not in Britain, that F. C. Howe could write (in 1903) that through the city "a new society has been created. Life in all its relations has been altered. A new civilisation has been born, a civilisation whose identity with the past is one of historic continuity." It was in Communist Poland that historic Warsaw was reconstructed after 1945.

City pride most usually meant not pride in the city but in particular cities; each one was recognised as having an individual identity. Philadelphia was different from Boston or Baltimore or Cincinnati or Chicago; Manchester was different from Liverpool or Birmingham; Warsaw from Cracow; Budapest from Vienna. In Britain, the historian Edward Freeman complained bitterly that some of his contemporaries could not understand how "the tracing out of the features and history" of particular cities could be "as truly a scientific business to one man as the study of the surrounding *flora* and *fauna* is to another." In the attempt to make history "scientific", analysis and imagery could become somewhat confused, as they were when ancient organic metaphors of the city were given new life. Yet the more emphasis is placed on particular cities and the differences between them, the closer we can draw to lost experience. The best 19th-century observers recognised (as clearly as Jane Jacobs has done in recent years) that "city processes in real life are too complex to be routine, too particularised for application as abstractions. They are always made up of the interaction of particulars, and there is no substitute for knowing the particulars. . . ." This is as true of Vienna or Paris or London as it is of New York.

Yet though cities as environments have to be treated separately before we can start to generalise about urban structures and styles—and some, like Venice or Kyoto, are visually unique—the city has never been, in fact, self-contained in history as in Asimov's short story, least of all Venice. The city has come into existence and developed—sometimes declined—through interdependence both with the rural hinterland and within a wider system of cities, linked through trade. The marketplace has mattered at least as much as temple or cathedral, fortress and walls. There have, of course, been capital cities which have been above all else centres of power and display, but for every capital city, rival of other capital cities, there have been many which above all else have been centres of commerce. As we classify cities or rank them in hierarchies, we can never leave economics out, whether we are concerned with buildings or with ways of life. Indeed, the most fascinating feature of the study of cities is that it must take account of so many subjects which are too often considered separately—along with economics, demography, geography, ecology, history, sociology, political science, anthropology, architecture, archaeology, to name only some of the most obvious.

NO SELF-CONTAINED DISCIPLINE can cope with the city or with cities. Nor, moreover, are all the disciplines taken together quite enough. Ignoring for a time the Ideal City—for this we have to turn to the philosophers—the real city has to be explored before it can be explained. Freeman's historian contemporary J. R. Green was once described by Lord Bryce as exploring a strange town and "darting hither and thither through the streets like a dog trying to find a scent." On the other side

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of the Atlantic, Robert Ezra Park, pioneer of the Chicago School of Urban Sociology, the first academic school of its kind in the world, was fully aware of the need to find scents even in a city which was not (on the surface at least) "strange." In inviting his students to explore Chicago, he always stressed that

> "the city is not . . . merely a physical mechanism and an artificial construction. It is involved in the vital processes of the people who compose it: it is a product of nature and particularly of 'human nature.' "

There was a similar awareness in Park's British predecessor, the sociologist Charles Booth, whose vast survey of London (then the world's largest city) during the last years of the Victorian Age entailed as much exploration as that associated with the names of Livingstone and Stanley in Africa.

> "It is in the town and not in the country [Booth wrote] that *terra incognita* needs to be written on our social maps. In the country the machinery of human life is plainly to be seen and easily recognised. . . . The equipoise on which existing order rests, whether satisfactory or not, is palpable and evident. It is far otherwise with cities, where as to these questions we live in darkness."

In some respects, we still live in darkness almost 100 years after Booth—despite the boom of the last quarter-century in urban studies, specialised and interdisciplinary—although we are perhaps clearer now than Freeman, Park or Booth were about the influences of the explorer's own attitudes and experience on the selection of facts about the city which he chooses to collect and the images which he seeks to present. The same city means quite different things to different people, even to residents of the city, and in considering impressions we have to distinguish between those of residents and visitors, of privileged and deprived, of reformers and boosters, to note only a few of the relevant categories. If the boom in urban studies has increased our understanding of the city, it is mainly through a sharper realisation of the different elements involved in our diverse perceptions, visual and social, of the city. In other words, we have to add psychology to the list of associated disciplines necessary for understanding. As one of the most stimulating recent British writers on the city, Peter Smith,[1] has put it, "Experiencing environment is a creative act. It depends as much upon the subject interpreting the visual array as upon the disposition of objects in space."

DURING THE 19TH CENTURY, the collection of facts about the city was one of the most active preoccupations of a new generation of statisticians, some involved in boosting cities, some in problem-solving within the city—and no account of 19th-century positivism would be complete without taking stock of it. During the late 20th century, however, we have focused our attention more on the range of human experience within the city, and the perceived pluses and minuses associated with it. Of course, we have left to experts—who were not there in the early 19th century—the practical tasks of dealing with the city's pressing problems: surveyors, engineers, traffic analysts, housing managers, leisure controllers, social workers, and above all, planners. There is a gulf between the two kinds of approach, and in recent years the "expertise" of each of the expert groups

[1] See Peter F. Smith, *Architecture and the Human Dimension* (1979), *The Syntax of Cities* (1977), *The Dynamics of Urbanism* (1975).

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has been subjected to increasing scrutiny. Meanwhile, city tensions multiply as the volume of writing about the city at every level, not least journalistic, increases. The 19th century talked of "the age of the cities". We talk of "the crisis."

Some observers (like Melvin Webber) have been claiming for more than a decade that we are moving into "the post-city age." As Patrick Geddes, Mumford's mentor, put it succinctly in 1905, "A City is more than a place in space, it is a drama in time." Before I dwell on our current preoccupations, which turn as much on survival as on civilisation, it is necessary to acknowledge that in perspective there has seldom been any consensus about the role of the city in human affairs. There has usually been a debate, often crude, occasionally sophisticated, with some crossing of sides. The Christian Bible begins in a garden and ends in a city; and both before and after the Christian Bible, garden and wilderness have been pitted against town, city, and conurbation. At times, classical literature has swayed later generations at least as much as the Bible, both in its portrayal of the urban and of the pastoral. Of course, we quickly move into metaphor here, as we do in Albert Camus's 20th-century *Cahiers*, where he writes that "as a remedy to life in society, I would suggest the big city. Nowadays, it is the only desert within our means."

THE MODERN DEBATE preceded the industrial revolution and was not a by-product of the rise of the industrial city, which was described in one magazine of the late 1830s as "a system of life constructed according to entirely new principles." Go back to the 1770s, the decade of American independence, and you have on the one side William Cowper's unforgettable lines "*God made the country, and Man made the town*", and on the other Dr Samuel Johnson's almost equally famous rebuke to Boswell: "No, sir, when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford."

In newly independent America, too, the city had its detractors and its defenders. One of the best-known passages in Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1784–85) is that in which he asserts that

> "the mobs of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government as sores do to the strength of the human body. It is the manners and spirit of a people which preserve a republic in vigor. A degeneracy in these is a cancer which soon eats to the heart of its laws and constitution."

The conception of the city as cancer—the organic metaphor gone wrong—was never to disappear thereafter. Indeed, for this reason, biology and physiology should doubtless be added to the list of associated disciplines which have been applied to the study of cities . . . and not merely through imagery, as in Jefferson's case, but through theory, like the theory that city growth depended ultimately on the fusion of healthy tissue from the countryside, on different and older demographic patterns.

The late 18th-century debate, which found a place for noise and nuisance as much as for numbers, often looked backwards. Yet it had many new ingredients. Thus, at the very time that there was talk of "cancers", the new word "*civilisation*"—and it is difficult to think that it *was* a new word—was coming into use. Related though it was historically to the word "city", "civilisation" did not come into use until the late 18th century. Johnson might sing the praises of London and question the delights of the countryside; yet as late as 1772 when Boswell discovered him preparing the fourth edition of his folio *Dictionary*, he learned that Johnson would not admit "civilisation" as a word, but only "civility."

In a decade of dramatic change, which also saw the introduction of the new word "technology" and of Watt's steam engine, not to speak of the drafting of the American Declaration of Independence and the publication of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, both "civilisation" and "the city" were already controversial subjects. Indeed, the decade ended in London with urban riot and the open expression of what many Londoners thought of as barbarity in the heart of a great city. Boswell, in talking about the words "civilised" and "civilisation", did not add that there was already an alternative vocabulary, itself to become controversial, pivoted on the words "cultivated" and "culture"—words derived not from the city but from the countryside.

Some cultivated people then and later were sceptical about or hostile toward "civilisation", as were romantic writers like Rousseau and Wordsworth, the former comparing cities with prisons, the latter pointing to the association of the city both with crime—the adjective he used was "dissolute"—and with meaningless bustle, "the same perpetual whirl of trivial objects, melted and reduced to one identity." "Civilisation itself is but a mixed good", Coleridge was to write, "if not far

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more a corrupting influence, the hectic of disease, not the bloom of health."

Ambiguous responses to the idea of "civilisation" were equally apparent two decades later, when John Stuart Mill in his brilliant essay on Coleridge, frequently discussed more than a hundred years later, attempted to draw up a balance sheet measuring "how far mankind has gained by civilisation." Mill was less interested in centuries-old contrasts between the urban and the pastoral, or in romantic evocations of nature as against culture of the rough against the polished, than in a qualified utilitarian assessment of social and cultural change.

On the credit side, Mill recorded "the multiplication of physical comforts; the advancement and diffusion of knowledge; the decay of superstition; the facilities of mutual intercourse; the softening of manners; the decline of war and personal conflict; the progressive limitation of the strong over the weak; [and] the great works accomplished throughout the globe by the cooperation of multitudes." Not all these manifestations of "civilisation" explicitly or obviously derived from the city context, although there was a tendency then and later—not least within the Chicago School of Urban Sociology—to relate all social indicators, socially favourable or unfavourable, to the influence of the city and of urban life styles. Certainly when Mill, following Coleridge, identified the items on the debit side, he had the city very much in mind. They include "the creation of artificial wants" . . . "monotony" . . . "narrow mechanical understanding" . . . "inequality and hopeless poverty"—even though "monotony", at least, and "inequality and hopeless poverty" had often been and were still being associated as much with the countryside as with the city. Then, as now, it was possible to argue about whether or not the city as such was a causal factor, rather than the society as a whole, and how to weight the different items in the balance sheet. What is curious to note, however, is that there was no specific reference in Mill's balance sheet to the rise of a new kind of city, the industrial city, the advent of which to some extent turned the terms of the argument and in the shadows of which we have lived ever since.

FOR ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN cities since the beginnings of recorded history—and earlier—it was only at the time when Mill was writing that it was possible to speak of "the age of great cities."

In 1800, there were only 22 cities in Europe with a population of more than 100,000 (and none in America). By 1850, these numbers had increased to 45 and 8; there were also 4 cities in the world with a population of over a million. By 1900, there were 160 cities in the world with a population of more than 100,000 and 19 with a population of over a million. Significantly, there were as many as 23 with a population over 500,000, including new products of the century—often described as "prodigies"—like Chicago in the USA and Melbourne in Australia. The population of London, "the world city", had risen to over 4 million people. Patrick Geddes called it an octopus or polypus, "a vast irregular growth without previous parallel in the world of life—perhaps likest to the spreading of a great coral reef."

In one turbulent decade, the 1880s, the number of cities of between 40,000 and 70,000 in the United States increased from 21 to 35 and the number of still bigger cities from 23 to 39, so that one young American scholar could proclaim in the last year of the century that "the tendency towards concentration or agglomeration is all but universal in the Western world."

Industrial cities constituted only one group of cities in this huge urban expansion, and even the most renowned of them, like Manchester, which was a Mecca for visitors during the 1840s, often became service centres as much as manufacturing concentrations, serving the needs of an adjacent industrial region. It became fashionable, indeed, to classify cities like flora and fauna as well as to deal with them individually or to trace the general processes of urbanisation. Yet it was the industrial city which shocked contemporaries into an awareness of the social implications of urbanisation. Manchester, where facts were worshipped, became a symbol. In Manchester, wrote the most famous of all 19th-century travellers, Alexis de Tocqueville,

> "humanity attains its most complete development and its most brutish; here civilisation works its miracles, and civilised man is turned back almost into a savage."

THERE WERE four features of the industrial city which received particular attention from critics: deterioration of the environment; social segregation; impersonal human relations; and materialism.

The first was obvious enough to the nose as well as to the eye, and it did not need prophets like

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Ruskin or novelists like Dickens to identify it. It was a business visitor from Rotherham in Yorkshire's West Riding, itself no Athens, who remarked of Manchester as early as 1808,

> "the town is abominably filthy, the Steam Engine is pestiferous, the Dyehouses noisome and offensive, and the water of the river as black as ink or the Stygian lake."

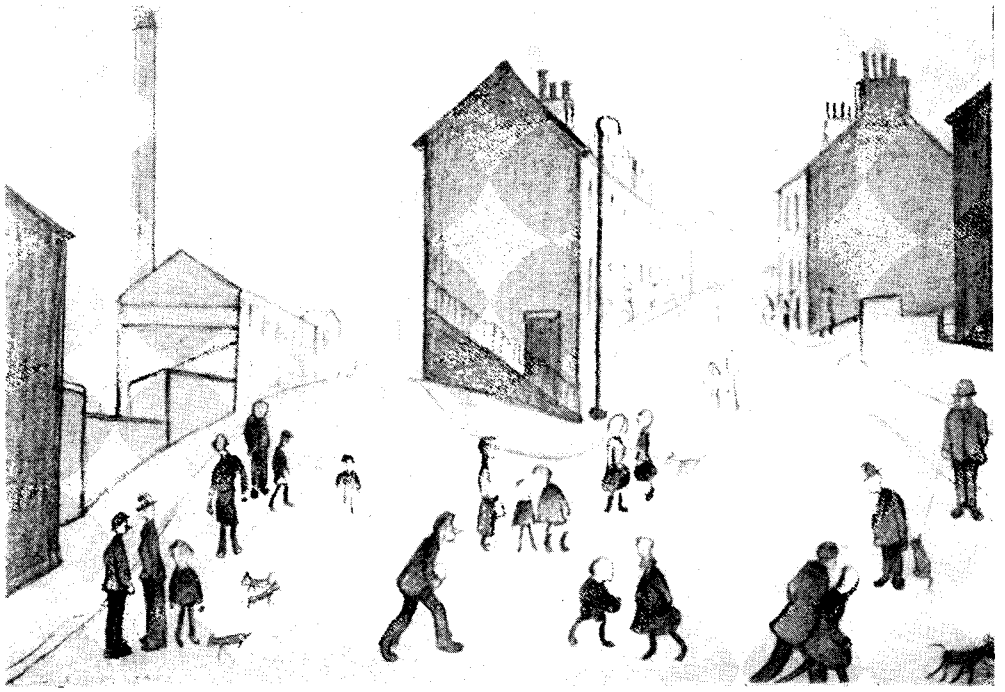
Yet Ruskin, interested as he was in the cities of Switzerland and of Italy, was moved by the experience of the industrial city to probe the relationship between the visual and the social as well as to indict a whole society and culture, and Dickens in his symbolic picture of Coketown—Chapter V of *Hard Times*, where the picture drawn is called "the Keynote"—has caught the sense of something more than appearances.

Like Tocqueville, Dickens places the savage—very much not the noble savage—in the middle of the city. "It was a town of red brick which would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but, as matters stood, it was a town of unnatural red and black, like the face of a painted savage." For Dickens, deterioration of the environment and impersonal human relations were two sides of the same question—they are often separated in the 20th century—and both were related to materialism and monotony:

> "It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of buildings full of windows where there was a trembling and a rattling all day long, and where the pistons of the steam engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness."

This was highly personal imagery, reminding us that Dickens should always be treated as painter rather than photographer; but what satire could do, statistics could do also, even though *Hard Times* was a satire on statistics. The facts of segregation were obvious enough in the industrial city, and they were made the most of by another of the early critics of Manchester, Friedrich Engels. In the pre-industrial city there were social gradations and propinquities. In Manchester, according to Engels—and he was not alone in his analysis—there were hostile classes and socially segregated districts.

> "He who visits Manchester simply on business or pleasure need never see the slums, mainly because the working-class districts and the middle-class districts are quite distinct. This



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> division is due partly to policy and partly to instinctive and tacit agreement between the two social groups."

The word *slum* was another new word, recorded for the first time by the *Oxford Dictionary* in 1825. Characteristically, it had no ancient roots and emerged from slang. Yet everywhere during the 19th century the industrial city became identified with slums as well as with factories.

The processes of segregation are fascinating to trace, whether or not we are dealing, as in 19th-century Britain, with segregation by income or, as in the later 19th century in the United States, with income and ethnic grouping. Indeed, in the Manchester of Engels, Irish segregation was a particular feature which he dealt with at length, and it was from the vantage point of Melbourne in Australia, a land of rural myth and city fact, that a writer observed in 1886 that

> "the rich live with the rich and the poor with the poor. The palace and the hovel, except in the imagination of the socialistic romancer, seldom adjut."

THE CHICAGO SCHOOL, operating in a city which was as much the shock city of its time as Manchester had been half a century earlier, interested itself not only in segregation but in all aspects of urban morphology, in the processes as much as in the structures. "Natural areas", Robert Park was to write, "are the habitats of natural groups. Every typical urban area is likely to contain a characteristic selection of the population of the community as a whole. In great cities the divergence in manner, in standards of living and in general outlook on life in different areas is often astonishing." Park went on to talk of a "sorting-out process", and, as memorably as Engels, of "little worlds" in the city "which touch but do not interpenetrate." Indeed, in a city where there was far more change of land use than in Manchester, he went on to claim that it was only because "social relations are so frequently and so inevitably correlated with spatial relations", and because "physical distances so frequently are, or seem to be, the indexes of social distances, that statistics have any significance whatever for sociology."

Many 20th-century urban sociologists—and geographers—have tried to place Park (and for that matter Engels) in social perspective, explaining why they felt as they did. If we wish to see the industrial city itself in perspective, we must not restrict our attention to the four features of it which received most attention from critics or with the generalisations that Lewis Mumford drew out of their and his own criticisms in his description of what he called (in 1938) the "insensate" industrial city.

It is not true that the new cities of the industrial revolution were really "man-heaps, machine warrens, not agents of human association for the promotion of a better life", as Mumford argued both in 1938 and in 1961. Nor is it true that "there were no effective centers in this urban massing: no institutions capable of uniting its members into an active city life; no political organization capable of unifying its common activities." Can 19th-century English history, let alone French or German history, be written in terms of the judgment that "in every quarter, the older principles of aristocratic education and rural culture were replaced by a single-minded devotion to industrial power and pecuniary success, sometimes disguised as democracy"?

Finally, it is not true that industrial cities were "all the same, variants of Dickens' Coketown, alias Smokeover, alias Mechanicsville, alias Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Merseberg, Essen, Elberfeld, Lille, Roubaix, Newark, Pittsburgh or Youngstown." When night falls it did not fall—and does not fall—on the same urban environment in all these places.

Industrial cities were as varied even in their appearance as pre-industrial cities. They had different social structures as well as different appearances. They drew on different heritages from the past, when they had a pre-industrial past, and they did not always invent the same history or duplicate the same monuments when they sought to create a heritage for posterity. Many of their buildings, monumental and functional, are worth preserving, and since in some societies they represent the whole of the past, the recent effort to preserve them or to adapt them to new purposes has intensified. They generated more voluntary effort in their own great age of expansion than had ever been generated in cities before, and through the focusing of attention on their problems, which were never minimised by contemporaries, they directed attention for the first time in human history to the full possibilities of social control. They were capable of enunciating civic gospels which combined concern, commitment and vigour, and their cultural as well as their social life attracts the interest of historians and today can both command respect and evoke nostalgic regret. Perhaps

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one of the most misleading of Mumford's judgments was that in the industrial city "sonorous oratory served the double function of stimulant and anaesthetic; exciting the populace and making it oblivious to its actual environment."

IF I HAD TO generalise in one sentence, I would not be euphoric. I would still fall back on the view I presented in *Victorian Cities*, in which I described the growth of industrial cities in Britain as "a characteristic Victorian achievement, impressive in scale but limited in vision, creating new opportunities but also providing massive problems." I would also want to note the strange coexistence of pride and fear in all the contemporary writing about the industrial city, and the continued preoccupation with the creation of an Ideal City, not least the idea of a "garden city", marrying town and countryside.

If the pride has until recently been somewhat neglected, the fear continues to dominate historical narrative of the period. One British observer during the early 1840s—and he was an optimist about industrial progress—described it for us thus:

> "As a stranger passes through the masses of human beings which have been accumulated round the mills [in the industrial north], he cannot contemplate these crowded hives without feelings of anxiety and apprehension amounting almost to dismay. The population is hourly increasing in breadth and strength. It is an aggregate of masses, our conceptions of which clothe themselves in terms which express something portentous and fearful."

The fear could be so great that, as in this case, the observer turned to the upheavals of nature for metaphor, comparing the rise of the masses to "the slow rising and gradual swelling of an ocean", as striking a metaphor as the comparable 20th-century "winds of change."

Yet the mysterious *terra incognita* (as Charles Booth called it) was not, of course, *terra incognita* to the people who actually lived there. Nor, *pace* Engels, did most of the people who lived there think of themselves as "*masses*." The term was originally applied from outside, a new variant in the industrial city of the older term "*mob*", associated with the pre-industrial city. There were wise city dwellers, who appreciated the dangers of thinking in these terms even at the time. For the most part they were doctors, clergymen and leaders of voluntary movements, who were prepared—indeed, expected—to cross urban frontiers into the *terra incognita*. One of them, a Leeds Nonconformist minister, warned his congregation in the 1840s against using the term "masses" too easily.

> "Our judgments are distorted by the phrase. We unconsciously glide into a prejudice. We have gained a total without thinking of the parts. It is a heap, but it has strangely become indivisible."

Not all 20th-century social criticism is so perceptive. We are bound to assess the industrial city, indeed, in the light of our own urban experience in the 20th century as well as in the light of pre-industrial urban experience. It may well be that our cities look more alike than theirs did, that it is we not they who have tampered with the sense of place, that we are more fearful than they were of what we do not experience ourselves within the life of the city, that we are less active in our voluntarism and more disillusioned about our expertise. Mumford has criticised the 20th-century city as sharply as he criticised the 19th-century industrial city, dwelling mainly on what he calls "the increasing pathology of the whole mode of life in the metropolis." The mess is the message.

It is fair to note that Mumford's is not the only view, and that the city generates as much argument now as it did in the 1840s or the 1890s, with first Los Angeles and then Sao Paulo standing out as the shock cities of recent history where all the problems and all the excitements seem to converge. Los Angeles, at least—and it has now passed into a new phase of its history—has always had its passionate defenders as Manchester had, although it was in neutral Palo Alto, not in Los Angeles, that a conference was held not long ago to compare as "shock cities" Manchester and Sao Paulo. The English architectural critic Reyner Banham's fascinating *Los Angeles, the Architecture of Four Ecologies* (published ten years ago and concerned with far more than architecture) explains why the 20th-century city continues to defy consensus. The mobility of Los Angeles can attract or disturb, the visual appearances stimulate or repel, even the weather (apart from smog) seems right or wrong. "Los Angeles has no weather", remarked a journalist in 1969, and added, "Los Angeles has beautiful sunsets—if man-made."

FOR THE PRECEDENTS of comments of this kind we have to turn back not to the 19th-century indus-

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trial city but to the 19th-century capital city, particularly London, Paris and (though it was not the administrative national capital) New York. It was of London, endowed with what Henry James called "general vibration", that Virginia Woolf wrote in her diary in 1918, "They say it's been raining heavily, but such is the civilization of life in London that I really don't know." Twenty years earlier the poet Richard Le Gallienne had proclaimed,

> *London, London, our delight,*
> *Great flower that opens but at night,*
> *Great city of the midnight sun,*
> *Whose day begins when day is done.*

The 19th-century metropolis inspired more poetry than the industrial city, particularly in Baudelaire. Balzac saw Paris as a stage, the greatest stage in France for human ambition to express itself; Zola saw it as a challenge, where individuals and groups were caught in its grip. Baudelaire, however, saw Paris as a place of perpetual change, of fleeting moments and quickened consciousness, beyond good and evil, and he communicated his vision not only to his often disturbed contemporaries but to future generations of writers. Thereafter, the old formal distinctions between urban and pastoral acquired new dimensions, as they were to do in the 20th-century writings of James Joyce, who (as Harry Levin once pointed out) lived in as many cities as the author of *The Odyssey*, each more polyglot and more metropolitan than the last. Yet his unique vision of the city rested not only on his own experience, but on a rich texture of historical and literary association. We move with him from *Dubliners* not only to Paris but to *Ulysses*. Feelings of attraction, and of recoil, toward the great metropolitan city, of total absorption and complete disengagement, are all expressed in his work, which is not only of immense imaginative power but of the most subtle complexity—as complex, indeed, as the early and mid-20th-century city itself.

The pictorial artist, too, has expressed something of this complexity in the 20th century, so that every serious student of cities must visit art galleries as well as archives or newspaper offices. Even in the 18th century—in the age of Johnson and Cowper—the poet George Crabbe was advising his readers that

> *Cities and towns, the various haunts of men,*
> *Require the pencil, they defy the pen . . . .*

Yet it is only in the 20th century that Western artists, beginning with the Italian futurists, turned enthusiastically to cityscapes. The German Expressionists followed, and in New York John Marin anticipated much verbal and visual comment on Manhattan with his paintings of major monuments like the Woolworth Building or Brooklyn Bridge—shaken by a brittle light and seeming to fuse with the sky. They are as much a product of their time as Dutch views of the city in the 17th and 18th centuries, many of them reaching at the city through green fields and across canals. There is an apocalyptic element in some 20th-century paintings—and photographs—of cities, for the camera too has come into history in the 19th and 20th centuries, through films as well as photographs. An appreciation of this apocalyptic element—and it should be added that the camera has brought in a new sense of city beauty also—brings us round by a full circle to what Mumford had to say about megalopolis as necropolis.

I CONCLUDE WITH four reflections on the contemporary scene (reflections on, not prescriptions for). None of them is original, and none of them focuses either on defence or disaster.

First, however rapid rates of urbanisation were in the 19th century, they have been dwarfed by 20th-century rates. *Second*, much urban growth in the last half of this century has been in so-called Third World countries. This brings in different approaches to problems and opportunities, some outside our tradition. *Third*, the position in the West, coexisting at a different stage of development, continues to raise profound questions about the nature of "civilisation"—though we seldom now choose to call it such—as well as about survival. *Fourth*, for various reasons we have a more shaky sense than we used to have of place and what it means, and we find it increasingly difficult to isolate the urban factor either in our analysis or in our policy-making.

The reflections must be brief. On the first—more rapid urbanisation rates than in earlier centuries—reflection starts in places like Hong Kong (if there is any place quite like Hong Kong) where skyscrapers grow together like trees in a forest and where new towns as big as Manchester was in 1900 can be built within a decade. In 1950 there were 75 cities in the world with populations of more than a million; in 1960, 141; in 1975, 191. The figure for 1985, it has been projected, will be 273. Moreover, as a result of the technological

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changes of the 20th century, particularly those associated with power and transportation, there are in many countries huge metropolitan areas, scarcely broken by anything which can be called rural, which may contain 25 million people or more. These are so different in scale and in organisation even from 19th-century cities, which were, as we have seen, already breaking with tradition, that (as Patrick Geddes foresaw in the first decade of this century) they seem to constitute a new species.

SECOND, SUCH CITIES and bigger concentrations have emerged not only in the so-called "advanced" countries but outside. The proportion of people in "developing countries" increased from 16.5% in 1950 to 28.3% in 1975. For South Korea, the comparable figures were 18.4% and 50.9%. *Asia Urbanizing* is the evocative title of a recent collection of essays, yet in Africa, too, and above all in Latin America, urbanisation has moved faster than it ever moved in Europe in the 19th century. The shock effect has certainly been great, at least to visitors. As Richard Meier put it in *India's Urban Future*, "the restrictions placed by poverty upon urban design always come as a shock to Western visitors", and it is interesting to compare Lévi-Strauss with Tocqueville. Noting—and, as we have seen, it is only one side of the picture—that we are accustomed to associate our highest values, both material and spiritual, with urban life", he found in India

> "the urban phenomenon reduced to its ultimate expression . . . filth, chaos, promiscuity, congestion; ruins, huts, mud, dirt . . . all the things against which we expect urban life to give us organized protection, all the things we hate and guard against at such great cost."

This, too, is one side of the picture, for a very different reason. It relates Indian experience entirely to our own views of the city in history to the tradition that stretches back to Greece and Rome. The Asian or African city continues to provoke clashing reactions within and between societies and cultures, not least between generations. Thus, in a study of Korean urbanisation, a particularly striking phenomenon, the authors insist that it would be much more accurate to refer to Asia's "teeming countryside" than to its "teeming cities", and that while all countries that urbanise rapidly have urban problems—of dislocation, adjustment and serving—urbanisation itself is "a normal and desirable concomitant of economic growth."

> "Korean urbanization [they conclude] has been a great success story during the third quarter of the 20th century. The basic reason is that the national government has focused its efforts on the promotion of economic growth instead of on control of urban growth and structure."

However different the traditions, the same remark might have been made in 19th-century Europe or America. On the other side, we have Jose Arthur Rios's comment on the Rio de Janeiro of the late 1960s, which recalls comments on London in the 17th and 18th centuries before the rise of modern industry:

> "Rio is the product of a vast maladjustment. Its growth is unparalleled by any other city in the nation. The tendency has been to enslave the whole country to this abnormal growth, like a tumor which drains all the energies of the body. Its high life is fed upon by the misery and backwardness of the rural population."

MY THIRD REFLECTION is renewed, if not inspired, by almost every magazine and Sunday colour supplement. Mumford's contemporary pathology

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also seems to dominate newspaper headlines when they deal with crises in urban finance (common to many parts of the world) or with riot (ethnic or social, or both). Biology seems to reinforce history. Thus, from a different angle from that of Mumford—though with equal concern—René Dubos has complained that "life in the modern city"—by which he meant the so-called advanced city of the West—"has become a symbol of the fact that man can become adapted to starless skies, treeless avenues, shapeless buildings, tasteless bread, joyless celebrations."

Such generalisation always invites *riposte*. The inner cities remain problem areas, particularly in Britain, but there have been immense changes in these inner areas—too few in Britain—not all for the worse, since the 1950s. The number of groups of people concerned not with being adapted, but with themselves adapting the urban environment, has greatly increased. There are more trees in the avenues and more people walking on them, more buildings with shape, and not all celebrations are joyless. There is more scepticism about accepted policies and more willingness to look for new answers. The awareness of the visual has been sharpened, although there is still a serious deficiency in visual education.

FOURTH, AND LAST, we have a more shaky sense than we used to have of place and what it means, and we find it increasingly difficult to isolate the urban factor in our analysis and in our policy-making. There has always been a tendency to attribute causal influences to the city which would be better attributed to the society and the culture, not to speak of the economy. Melvin Webber, who has hailed "spatial dispersion" in a new post-city age, argues that

> "neither crime-in-the-streets, poverty, unemployment, broken families, race riots, drug addiction, mental illness, juvenile delinquency, nor any of the commonly noted 'social pathologies' marking the contemporary city can find its cause or its cure there. We cannot hope to invent local treatments for conditions whose origins are not local in character, nor can we expect territorially defined governments to deal effectively with problems whose causes are unrelated to territory or geography."

It is a salutary remark, yet merely a first point in an argument. If the city cannot deal with all these problems, neither, by itself, can the nation state. There are too many interdependencies. Cities have always been part of a network, even when nation states have been at war. Moreover, we cannot afford to leave out the local from our reckoning. Even with spatial dispersion, it is useful to have senses of belonging which extend beyond the private or the national. Indeed, we have to work out new relationships between the local (through our involvement in a particular place) and the global (through our involvement, whether we like it or not, in our whole planet). A touch of pride in where we are as well as where we came from is not out of place. At the end of our odyssey, however, we might not all agree with Euripides that "the first requisite to happiness is that a man be born in a famous city."

Attics

A room, unutterably feminine,
A room she dreamed, but painted by Gwen John—
I see a white-distempered attic in
Her mind, pastel, and faintly put-upon
By men, who cannot understand the light
From the window lingering on the lace
Curtain's folds, or the disturbing woman-white
Illumination on the mirror, almost a face.
A girl is sitting on a fragile chair
With her sad brushes and her thoughts, her hair
In tints of autumn, and her skin says, *Kiss,*
Kiss, kiss my skin, for I am touch and sense
Brushed womanly into this eloquence,
Unclothed in paint to teach you nakedness.

Douglas Dunn

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Ruth Silcock

Thoughts about Neighbours

(based on a story in Mrs Gaskell's Life of Charlotte Brontë)

When we were small, when mother was so ill,
Dying upstairs, some wealthy neighbours came
To pray and comfort, showing such goodwill
That even father overlooked the shame
Of taking help from strangers, and until
Her death, they brought her grapes and gifts. The same
Kind neighbours used to ask us out to tea,
To visit their grand house and family.

Then mother died at last, and father said
There should be no more visiting. We stayed
Shut up indoors like father, wrote and read
Newspapers, looked from windows, sometimes played
Whispering games in the cold uncarpeted
Uncurtained rooms. Or, holding hands, we made
Long walks on the moors together, and at night
Sat by the kitchen fire, talked by firelight.

The servants used to tell of the countryside:
Crimes, riots, lock-outs; murders, hangings; who
Had danced with demons, met with fairies; a bride
Stolen, or runaway, or maddened; they knew
Of cock-fights, preachings, whippings, wailings; pride
Fallen, families ruined, secrets, the true
Histories of our parish, about a lost
Child, a cruel parent, a local ghost.

This is what happened: a wealthy family
Of strict Dissenters built themselves a grand
House by the high road, and lived stylishly.
Across the road, on a separate piece of land,
Stood a greenhouse in a garden, cumbrously
Made, more of wood and wall than glass, but planned
For novelty in our neighbourhood. These fine
Rich rigid religious people liked to shine.

An elder daughter had married well. When near
Her time, she begged a younger sister to come
And stay with her, to keep her thoughts from fear.
This favourite sister came, to be sent home
Ill and dispirited. The cause was clear.
The husband had seduced the child. For some
Months she was shut away, despised and shamed.
Her mother pitied her, but also blamed.

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The angry father said he would pay a man
To take his daughter, and give her a name.
Some brutal fellow wed her, and began
To break her heart, soon killing her. The shame
Was buried in her grave more quickly than
The family had expected. Free to claim
A moral reputation without stain,
They visited the rich husband again.

The greenhouse stands by the high road. Passers-by
Can hear the mother and daughter walk and weep
Though both have long since mouldered. The family
Are held as cursed in our countryside, and reap
Failure in business, failure in health. We try
To remember grapes brought from a greenhouse; keep
Comfort from neighbours' visits, their goodwill
That troubled father so, when mother was ill.

Elizabeth Bartlett

The Intruder

I grow in the dark from nothing.
At first you don't know I am there,
or mistake me, with a frisson of fear,
for my brother, the seeding one.

I grow for no reason, attaching myself
to whichever organs I care to choose,
for until they cut me I have nothing to lose,
and my beauty is never seen.

I grow at my own whim or fancy,
perhaps after you've fallen in the snow,
or later in the season on the patio,
slipping on wet stones after summer rain.

I grow to the size only I decide;
an acorn or an apple, secreting
a brown liquid like a greetings
present of soft-centred milk chocolate.

I grow for the hands of the surgeon,
my only admirer, who dangles me before
the camera, catching my profile, whore
that I am, with my insidious ways.

I grow as a child grows and I am rare,
but I am not loved for my fibrous skin,
and after my portrait I am thrown in a bin
to shrivel with all the other intruders.

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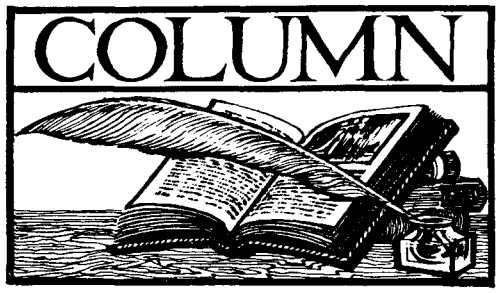

TRICK-OR-TREAT TIME is safely over: the witch hats have been put away, spent fireworks and hollow pumpkins discarded; the lawn has another year to recover from the Hallowe'en bonfire. But don't relax too soon. Before long, we'll face the carol singers. Not, in my district, Dickensian waits, ruddy-faced and mufflered, with a lantern on a stick, invited in for a bowl of punch or hot toddy. No such luck. Nowadays and hereabouts, we'll be lucky to get one verse of *Good King Wenceslas* (pronounced to rhyme with "senseless"), a curtly thumbed bell, and a sullen outstretched palm.

Last year, several such visitors used the hitch-hiker's trick of shoving forward their best-looking representative, a dim-witted cherub, while his crafty-faced colleagues cowered in the darkness. None seemed to know the rest of the words, and most were hazy about the tune. *O tempora, o morons*, I was tempted to feel.

Which makes it a change to go to the local carol service, laid on every year by a thoughtful vicar, with well-known tunes and not too many of them, culminating in a perilous, magical scene when everyone holds a lighted candle in the darkened church, dripping wax and singeing hair, but singing all the better because it's hard to see. Fine untrained sopranos suddenly ring out, uninhibited. Basses bellow. Baritones growl and croon.

A baritone myself, I'm often embarrassed by the pitch problem. As soon as the organ peals its introduction, I know I'm for it. Can I match that fine tenor sound all through the melody? Probably not. So I drop an octave—which is fine for the high notes: I sound like the poor man's Tito Gobbi (and I do mean poor). But then the tune dips, and I grind along like the utterly destitute man's Boris Christoff. Hammer Films could hire me as a creaking door. Neighbours in the pew, meanwhile, sneak covert glances. Is this a castrato or a frog?

Any member of a pop group, I imagine, would advise me to transpose and sing in harmony; but that's too hard. A slave to mimicry, I drop into pseudo-Scots when a Glaswegian plumber calls, or Lancashire hotch-potch when in the Lake District. It's good for foreign languages, but hopeless in a choir: all I can do is trail along in unison with my loudest colleagues, who in church are usually women. Any openings for a counter-baritone on music's mezzanine floor?

It all springs, of course, from a faulty musical education. As a child, offered piano lessons, I answered grandly: "I can play already"—meaning that I could pick out *Deep Purple* and *Just the Way You Look Tonight* with several fingers of my right hand. I later added *South of the Border* and *Sheep May Safely Graze* to this select repertoire; but there it stopped. My parents were too indulgent to insist on a teacher, and solo sessions with what I found in the family music-stool dwindled into a Czerny without maps. Instead, I learned to play that rewarding but undemanding instrument, the hi-fi.

I've regretted the folly ever since. Only now, when my own children need encouragement, have I turned back to five- and ten-finger exercises. Painfully, with the help of mnemonics like "All Cows Eat Grass" and "Every Good Boy Deserves Favour", I stumble through the stave lines, feeling a perfect idiot. But how many others of my generation are equally illiterate? It seems astonishing, today, that we weren't ashamed of being unable to read.

Mind you, we had our excuses. An unmusical physicist or mathematician, confronted for the first time with a conventional score, might well experience my own man-from-Mars reactions. Blobs and ovals, with or without dots and tails, seem an eccentric way to denote sound-waves and their duration. Wouldn't it be more natural to use a frequency chart with tadpole shapes? Various cranks, I gather, have from time to time proposed new forms of notation, but with less success than Esperantists or phonetic spellers. So brace yourselves, fellow-analphabetics: we have to learn the language as it is.

One reason, of course, is the same as that which stymies the spelling reformers: professional resistance to change. Music is a "mystery" like any medieval métier; admission to the craft or guild demands tough apprenticeship, initiation into arcane codes. Having mastered one's mystery, one longs to exert it—not learn another crackpot system which may prove quackish after all. How would music publishers like to transcribe the world's masterpieces into some new-fangled gibberish invented by a sound engineer, with no guarantee of sales? And how long would the transition take? When it was complete, a link with the past might have been lost. Finally, a "perfect" visual transcription of musical sound would leave little scope for interpretation. The blobs and ovals, clumsy and crude as they seem, at least allow performers to vary the tone and tempo, making all the difference between a humdrum "rendering" and a triumph of the deepest art.

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ALL THAT sounds convincing, as it should: but it leaves out of the argument one factor that's altered the musical scene in the last generation. This is the instrument at which so many of us are virtuosi—the hi-fi. Together with magnetic tape, high-quality reproduction of sound has provided something more like "perfect" musical notation, even for those unable to read music. A record producer like the late Walter Legge at EMI was able and eager to assemble "ideal" orchestras, conductors, and casts for his recordings of opera; to rehearse them meticulously; to coax from them brilliant performances; and then to improve on even those by splicing together the very best bits. The result, as often as not, was finer than anything that the self-same team could have played in one consecutive performance. Thanks to Legge's masterful responsiveness, it still had the "edge" of a live concert; but it lacked the minor blemishes inescapable in real life. Even in mono, it managed to convey the space and depth of its surroundings. In properly used stereo, with no "hole in the middle" between the loudspeakers, it far surpassed what anyone could have heard in performance from the very best seats in the house.

Tastes change and differ. Walter Legge's recordings of twenty years ago may not last for ever, and his idea of perfection may not be yours or mine. But listening again confirms not only my inexpert judgment but also that of more qualified critics. Here were some definitive readings which no future interpreter could afford to ignore.

That being so, it changes our standards. Rather as some international cricket and football matches, screened worldwide on television, put lesser events in the shade, so hi-fi recording makes us less tolerant of imperfections in the concert hall. How did some of Mozart's or Bach's contemporaries measure up to what they were supposed to be playing? What standards were upheld by local orchestras—let alone musical *soirées* among friends? A good time, no doubt, was had by all. It's better to play, however badly, than only to listen, however acutely. But my own ears and memory tell me that the quality of public performance has vastly improved since the days of 78s—and not only in terms of technical virtuosity. Even young players, as recent musical contests have shown, now display a grasp and depth of feeling that was once rare except in a mature maestro. As in athletics, where sprinters run ever faster, there seems almost no limit to the achievements in view.

The late Glenn Gould put it plangently. Recording, he said, had established a new relationship between listener and performer. In effect, it had made the customer king. Today, with record reviews on the radio minutely contrasting rival offerings, and paperback record guides awarding Michelin-like rosettes, there's a suspicion of *gourmetisme*, of lip-smacking connoisseurship—even, perhaps, of race-course winner-picking. We listen to the music, yes: but half an ear is cocked for the Best Buy. Shall we ever recapture the innocent astonishment of hearing a work performed live for the first time? That too may have irrelevant elements, like watching a high-wire acrobat, tense lest he should fall. But it's deeply different from the no less dizzy perfection of spliced tape.

And recording has other hazards, some of them candidly admitted in the memoir of Walter Legge recently compiled by his widow Elisabeth Schwarzkopf.[1] Interspersed with appreciations and a linking commentary, this reprints a number of Legge's own trenchant essays, including one on Sir Thomas Beecham. In November 1937, Legge managed to record Beecham conducting the Berlin Philharmonic in a performance of *Die Zauberflöte*.

> "We had two more sessions for necessary repeats in the first week of March 1938. Now, more than forty years later, it can be told that one side of this set was *not* conducted by Beecham and *not* played by the Berlin Philharmonic; neither was free when the hall was available and I desperately needed all three. It was Bruno Seidler-Winkler, Electrola's house accompanist, who conducted the Berlin State Opera Orchestra and followed Beecham's tempi and nuances through headphones. No prizes are offered for identification of which 78 r.p.m. side!"

Amusing as it is, this seems to verge on fraud. Some records from Eastern Europe and elsewhere have likewise been suspected of piracy, akin to scruffy pirated versions of the *Pocket Oxford Dictionary* discovered in Pakistan. Illicit recordings from the radio or from concert-halls, and even copies from commercial discs with fictitious artists' names—all these have been suspected, if not always proven; and for many years the sloppy habits of record companies made such subterfuge simple.

STRANGELY, it was jazz records that began to set higher standards of scholarship. Connoisseurs demanded, and got, the dates of sessions printed on the sleeve or label; they wanted to know, in as much detail as possible, the "personnel" playing on each track. Slowly, records of serious music began to follow suit—but it's still rare to be told about individual members of the band, even so eminent a member of Legge's Philharmonia Orchestra as the late Dennis Brain. With players

[1] *On and Off the Record: A Memoir of Walter Legge.* By ELISABETH SCHWARZKOPF. Faber and Faber, £9.50.

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shifting as they do, such information would be valuable; and recording dates, at the very least, should be given as a matter of course. In literature, the letters "*n.d.*" in a catalogue usually suggest an obscure and early publication or a fly-by-night publishing house.

Sometimes, it's true, copyright arrangements dictate the use of pseudonyms, like "Walter Plinge" in the theatre. It may be fun to try guessing a performer's real identity; and since the pseudonym's unlikely to be famous, the purchaser's hardly being done down. But another fact revealed in the Legge memoir made me more uneasy. Until I read it, I'd not realised that singers sometimes supplied each other's top notes. There's no great harm done, admittedly. It simply smacks of the last reel of *Singin' in the Rain*.

So tape-recording makes possible untold shenanigans. We've all heard of tone-deaf pop groups whose hits are electrically fabricated, or of "live" concerts at which the cavorting lads mime to their own deafening pre-recorded sound. It should be no surprise that better, if worse-paid, musicians sometimes do likewise. It all adds to the labyrinth of life.

It can add also to our own enjoyment. Not merely by letting us hear impossibly fine performances that never happened in one go—nor merely by challenging all performers to give of their utmost because listeners' standards are now so high. Tape-recording, once the first shock is over, can even assist our own clumsy efforts to make music ourselves.

The first shock—that's the major hurdle. Anyone hearing his speaking voice for the first time, without the extra resonance of feedback through his own skull, is usually appalled at the sound. Piping, petulant, snooty, or over-smooth, it crushes the ego like a candid camera. "The microphone cannot lie", we imagine—although of course it can. Even worse is the first recording of one's efforts to play an instrument—a slow, plonking piano, a hesitant, breathy mouth-organ, an excruciating violin.

Clear that hurdle, however, and you know the worst. Things can only get better. That stiff left hand will roll and dance, the harmonica will become atmospheric, the violin will play in tune; and with tape recordings you can monitor your progress. One day, you may take your cassette to a party. It's handier than a harp.

It even applies to *vox humana*. In your private recording studio, you can parody all your unfavourite singers. There's the fierce elocutionist, always sounding as if he's in a bad temper. There's the gut-busting tenor, belting it out like a demented Neddy Seagoon. There's the BBC mid-morning baritone, forever assuring us that we've never smelt the tangle of the Isles. There's the limply limpid madrigal man, hardly mad but all wriggle, impossibly pure and seemingly sexless. If you can manage a falsetto, there's the thin, honky French soprano, making Berlioz sound as if he's being sung down the nostrils of a horse.

And there's you—or me. Perpetually uncertain whether to sing bass or tenor, contralto or soprano, we wobble uneasily in and out of key. Well, before this year's carol service, why not put in a half-hour with a blank tape? At best, you may stretch your range—downwards, for safety's sake. At worst, you'll discover your limits. And if you possess a sophisticated tape deck and a decent small cassette player, you could do worse than pull a Walter Legge.

M

Détente

The kettle siffles to a shrill
didactic whistle. Kitty is in her kitchen,
chopping parsley and logic.

Prague, Afghanistan, Poland:
the blade of meaning becoming blunt
from lying too long in the drawer of speech.

Dialectics, dialectics,
oregano, tarragon.
She read it all in *Newsweek*.

Fragrance of Chanel in the nape of her neck.
No doubt you're right, I say,
imagining my fingers in her hair.

Michael Hulse

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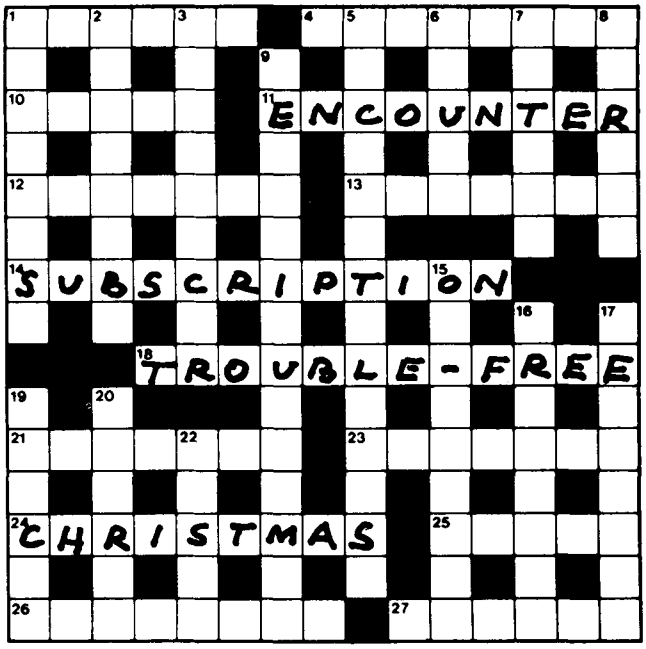

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Waiting for 1984

On Orwell & Evil

By JAMES MCNAMARA & DENNIS J. O'KEEFFE

"The Kingdom of darkness . . . is nothing else but a confederacy of deceivers that to obtain dominion over men in this present world, endeavour by dark and erroneous doctrines, to extinguish in them the light . . . ."

Thomas Hobbes, LEVIATHAN *(1651)*

THERE IS at the present, at the beginning of the 1980s, a prevailing spirit of catastrophism. The most familiar form this takes in political discussion is the rehearsal of a variety of threats to our Western political process. Time is running out; the political ship is going down; the liberal endeavour has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. It may seem rather surprising, after 300 years of talk about the *res publica*, to imagine that political liberty and its associated felicities could be turned off within a generation, as if society were an alcoholic in whom the higher faculties fail first. However, an elemental apocalyptic mood is back in fashion, after a long period of optimism grounded in the celestial mechanics of Newton and the theory of gradual sequential evolution propounded by Darwin. Has anyone done more to make this intimation of doom widespread than George Orwell in his classic work *Nineteen Eighty-Four*?

Orwell's ideas, alas, have entered our political language at the level of cliché, for many who have never read Orwell's works nevertheless speak of "double-think", "Big Brother", and many other notions from the distinctive Orwellian vocabulary. (A current advertisement for Evian water in the London underground reads: "All rain is equal. But some waters are more equal than others.") But Orwell's voice seems increasingly pertinent with the passing of time. He was an intuitive social theorist of genius, in whose fiction, and especially in his *1984*, an extraordinarily wide range of theoretical perspectives is discernible.

There is a possible objection to this approach. William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* may read like a Durkheimian exercise, but it is a novel and should not be attributed empirical force as an island reportage; *1984* is fiction and should not be treated as a theory. This prescription, however, cannot be binding. First, *1984* has many features which invite other than a purely literary response. Secondly, speculative theory has often involved imaginative constructions, from Plato to Marx. The fictional garb of a work does not diminish its explanatory force. What Sovietology could offer us a more cogent picture of Russian reality in the 1930s than Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*? And how vividly Marx's contemporary, Heinrich Heine, caught the sense of things to come:

> "The future smells of Russian leather, of blood, of godlessness, and many whippings. I would advise our grandchildren to be born with very thick skin on their backs."
>
> *"Die Zukunft riecht nach Juchten, nach Blut, nach Gottlosigkeit und nach sehr vielen Prügeln. Ich rate unsern Enkeln, mit einer dicken Rückenhaut zur Welt zu kommen."*
>
> *Lutezia: Berichte uber Politik, Kunst und Volksleben, XLV, I,* Paris, 12 Juli 1842

Though Max Weber and Sir Karl Popper may be correct in holding that large-scale historical prediction is scientifically illegitimate, it may still be held that a moral and prophetic vision lying at the centre of a work of art can have much more ex-

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planatory power than anything produced by formal social science. *1984* confronts some of the central problematics of modern social theory: development, control and stratification, knowledge and language, and all of these grouped round a highly original perception of evil as a political category.

Backwards to the Millennium: Orwell on Development

IT IS NOW CLEAR that *1984* contains a model of the demise of British capitalism, or rather is a picture of England in a world where capitalism has been destroyed. Bernard Crick has pointed out, in his recent biography of George Orwell, that in the impoverished bureaucracies of contemporary Eastern Europe Orwell's novel has always been read as angry satire; and Irving Howe observed that Orwell, always ahead of his time, was aware of the myth that dictatorships are at least efficient.[1] Certainly the England of *1984* is a vast, seedy slum: soap is scarce, razors are blunt, the lifts do not work, ulcers go untreated. Every cigarette must be precisely calculated. Is not the fear of such a turn of events one of the components of our present mood of catastrophism?

Orwell predicts an impoverished permanent war-economy, with vastly expensive government activity and a meagre life for the masses—that combination of public affluence and private squalor (to quote Milton Friedman's pun on J. K. Galbraith) which the people of Eastern Europe must endure. The state has arrogated to itself more and more of the national product; and to obtain the coffee, sugar and other goods which were commonplaces of early 20th-century capitalism, the inhabitants of the *1984* régime are forced to turn to the black market. And the modern socialist world *is* like this. Orwell does not tell us why affluence has vanished but his book bears at least some resemblances to the message, *à la* Milton Friedman or Friedrich von Hayek, that the hypertrophy of the state is the attenuation of voluntary exchange, without which affluence is impossible.

Unlike Marxism, the *1984* model is retrogressive. It depicts a world which has taken a huge leap backwards into the primordial slime of historical potential. The new state is ancient tyranny writ large, a new Assyrian or Inca slave-state whose despotism is compounded by a relentless technological surveillance of the population and an utter moral nihilism to which no Sennacharib or Atahualpa could have aspired. The future, it transpires, has indeed an ancient heart.[2] It will be like the worst of the past, only more so.

Orwell's grim question is whether freedom and affluence are a mere fleeting interruption in the long history of that poverty and coercion which have constituted the normal condition of post-Stone-Age man. Orwell's triad runs: despotism; liberalism; despotism. He saw a world in the 1930s being overwhelmed by the politics of Hitler and Stalin. National Socialism proclaimed the gutter, and the *1984* state is its salutation. Although Marxian corporatism spoke of restoring man to himself, intolerance and power-mania overwhelmed what was good in it. Indeed the original moral intentions of Marxism are highly problematic, and Leszek Kolakowski has challenged the conventional view that communism is largely a "betrayal" of its founder, by arguing that the Stalinist state was a quite legitimate version of the original vision.[3] Whatever the truth, hopes have been betrayed. Never in history has any large-scale messianism so colossally failed in the promised largesse.

PERHAPS IT MATTERS nothing, ultimately, whether despotism is brazen and self-congratulatory as with Nazism, or buried in a perverted "transfiguration of Christianity", like Marxism, for the real programme which the *1984* state anticipates is the abolition of history. Are there not today many virulently teleological régimes which nevertheless seek to cast the actions of men in an unchanging mould? Policies which seek to stifle new thinking are, ironically, labelled "cultural revolution", and perhaps reached their ultimate lunacy in Pol Pot's Kampuchea where the bespectacled were liquidated as dangerous intellectuals. Modern Tanzania, a state which loudly proclaims an alternative future, is bicycling determinedly towards the past. In South Africa the logic of *apartheid*, a teleology of racial supremacy, requires the inexorable extension of the state machinery. The pluralistic course of history is diverted into a stagnant backwater. Nowhere in the pages of Karl Popper or Raymond Aron or Leszek Kolakowski has this understanding of social retrogression been so squarely faced as in *1984*. The 19th-century conceit that "development" implies a forward and liberating momentum encounters at the hands of this saint of common sense a truly 20th-century comeuppance.

[1] Irving Howe, "1984: History as Nightmare" in Howe (ed.), *Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four: Text, Sources, Criticism* (1963), p. 192.

[2] Carlo Levi, *Il Futuro ha un Cuore Antico* (Turin, 1956).

[3] Leszek Kolakowski and George Urban, "The Devil in History: A Conversation", ENCOUNTER, January 1981, pp. 9-26.

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Despotism & Social Control

THE *1984* régime reduces all social life to power, renders social action a zero-sum game. All important decision-making is in the hands of an inscrutably remote élite. The central question is: how far could such a régime secure the unquestioning loyalty of its individual members? It is a highly pertinent issue, for as many despotisms have been fleeting as enduring. (Attila and Chaka are obvious examples.) Long-lasting societies have all had some element of theocracy, this being necessary to secure at least the cohesion of the élite. Moreover, John Plamenatz argues, there are good *prima facie* grounds for believing that the majority of the denizens of past despotisms did not fully internalise the principles on which they were based. And there are countless examples of social control resting on sheer terror and coercion, as Stanislav Andreski has pointed out.[4]

Orwell, like many modern sociologists, seems to exaggerate the socialising effectiveness of régimes. But he rightly spots that a mixture of brute force and propaganda is involved, and that the régime will continue to employ the former even if the latter is successful. His régime is a bureaucratic despotism of a rather classless kind, a "model of socialism" outlined by Raymond Aron.[5] It is communist rather than fascist, but only by dint of survival. The fascist states, especially Nazi Germany, did not exist long enough to enact more than a fraction of their grisly programmes. But Hitler called himself a "socialist" and claimed to be hostile to big business and to the Catholic church; we cannot be sure that he would not eventually have begun murdering priests and capitalists as well as Jews and Slavs. As long as significant remnants of a capitalist economy survived, Germany necessarily retained an appropriate semi-bourgeois class-structure; and it survived the War. Nevertheless, the drift of the régime was unmistakably in the same direction as Stalinism.

ORWELL'S BOOK depicts a régime which obeys a practice become familiar all over the world since 1949: the emphasis in the technique of control is not upon the masses, nor upon the élite, but upon the "outer-party members", people like Winston and Julia who thus become in our minds the embodiment of the individual for our times. It is highly significant that one of the roots of *Solidarity* in Poland was a rebellion of the "outer-party members."

Orwell was reliving in his book his own struggle within the socialist movement in England. He was saying that the man who internalises a totalitarian ideology but then rounds on it, risking everything—after the manner of Djilas or Kolakowski, or even of an artist like Camus who dissents from an establishment orthodoxy and thus incurs the wrath of his erstwhile colleagues—is the true agent of moral progress. This is the point Raymond Williams misses entirely in his sneering analysis.[6] Not to cheer your own team on is the real courage, the truly distinctive mark of the rational imagination. Having joined and then dissented from the British imperial establishment, Orwell joined only to dissent from the English socialist movement (Ingsoc) when it appeared to threaten even more drastically the individual moral conscience. All societies must socialise their functionaries: Orwell had recognised the permanent dilemma of modern despotism—some functionaries resist, and the only logic left to the régime is to annihilate them spiritually. The treatment of the methods the

[4] John Plamenatz, *Man and Society* (1963), vol. 2, p. 361. Stanislav Andreski, *Social Sciences as Sorcery* (1972), p. 181.

[5] For a lucid discussion of the views of Aron, Djilas, and many others, see David Lane, *Politics and Society in the USSR* (1978).

[6] Raymond Williams, *Orwell* (1971). Williams constantly suggests in this book that the case for socialism remains strong. He never says, except with vague rhetoric, what that case is.

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régime uses to this end has become the most famous aspect of his novel.

Ignorance & Control

IN ORWELL'S ENGLAND of the 1980s the marvellous intellectual life of the Enlightenment has totally perished. Language has been reduced to a series of slogans, thought has been emptied of content, the empirical cast of mind has been stamped out. Values have been turned upside down and the truth has been suppressed.

Winston Smith is the last liberal rationalist. O'Brien is an anticipation of Marxian phenomenology. The world is what the state decides it shall be. The state can define the rules of number, abolish the orgasm, put out the very stars. Anyone familiar with the theses of contemporary "sociology of education" will find O'Brien's propositions uncanny.[7] He has evidently studied at several universities in England, France and the United States, sitting in on academic courses that were not begun until Orwell had been dead for 20 years. Are Big Brother, Emmanuel Goldstein, the foreign wars *real?* Their factual standing is irrelevant. The power-structure *realises* them all. Independent reality has yielded to propaganda.

Orwell is warning the reader against the corruption of language, against false theories of knowledge. He is fearful of the intellectual degeneration which could usher in a new darkness. Nor has the danger yet receded. How long could a civilised order survive if it embraced the East River standards of the General Assembly of the United Nations? And the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva is corrupt in the true Orwellian sense; its very name a lie.[8]

Progress and retrogression both turn fundamentally on moral change. The network of institutionalised falsehood and mediocrity which has spread round the globe since *1984* was written is now so familiar that the phenomenon can be illustrated as effectively by the operations of the US advertising industry as by the illusory politics of one-party Third World states (Idi Amin's police-state brutes belonged to the "State Research Bureau.") What has not been noted is that the individual outside voice which historically has fed into society its most fertile insights has been largely silenced or rendered impotent. Orwell does not deny the possibility of progress. It is its probability he doubts. He is a Protestant atheist disposed to accept St John's word that mankind's story does not end happily. His vision is a contemporary *Revelation* without the soteriological gleams. The beast is there; but not the lamb. Without moral individualism, a state founded on claims of endless dynamism could come to be locked into a horrible stasis, a blasphemous earthly equivalent of *nunc stans*.

The Critics

HOW WAS Orwell's vision received? The attacks began immediately and have continued ever since. Some critics have backtracked Orwell's nightmare to his own psychology or childhood. It is easy to take what Donald MacRae finds a "crude fable" and attribute it to a dying man's pathological projections or his remembrance of a tyrannical prep school.[9] Bernard Crick's recent biography effectively disposes of these charges; but even he continues to address a non-problem in its own terms. The very hallmark of Orwell's writings is their palpable sanity in a world of extreme causes. In any case the critique rests on a false psychology of art. If *1984* did reflect a sick despair or the echo of a hateful school this would not diminish in any way the book's artistic authority.

The late Rayner Heppenstall's version is that *1984* is a kind of fever and must be excluded from the Orwellian canon;[10] but Heppenstall had the peculiarly English problem of failing to recognise genius just at the point of its fulfilment. Professor Crick is equally misleading when he asserts that *1984* is simply a great book that Orwell wrote just before he happened to die. It very clearly is his *summa*, a magnificently honest anti-*apologia pro vita sua* in which he achieves that authentic voice of English dissent which takes us back through Blake and Swift to Langland.

In quite a different vein, Anthony Burgess's *1985* (published in 1978) holds that Orwell's nightmare is not consistent with what we know of the past. He offers us an alternative—political communities oscillate between two modes of governance: the Augustinian and the Pelagian. The former is authoritarian, pessimistic, and puritan; the latter optimistic, generous, and libertarian. Burgess is reviving an ancient theological controversy, recast in the form of two inevitable political archetypes. History is a circular process in

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[7] See, for example, M. F. D. Young (ed.), *Knowledge and Control* (1971). Many of the essays in this influential book turn on precisely the kind of solipsism and power-reductionism which O'Brien espouses.

[8] The ILO has many members from countries where free trade unions (strikes, etc.) are illegal.

[9] Donald MacRae, *Ideology and Society* (1961) p. 212. Anthony West, "George Orwell" in his *Principles and Persuasions* (1958), p. 158.

[10] Rayner Heppenstall, "Orwell: A Blurred Portrait", ENCOUNTER, February-March 1981, pp. 77-80.

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which these two types endlessly replace each other. Society goes nowhere, except round on itself, and Orwell has erred in holding that this dialectic could cease.

The Burgess critique is unconvincing; there have been only a tiny minority of societies which could be called "liberal" without an abuse of the term. Liberal capitalism is the historical newcomer, without any earlier analogues. Whatever their differences, slavery, hydraulic bureaucracies, feudalism, and semi-nomadic empires all involved coercive systems of social control. Orwell had grasped that poverty and despotism are the usual conditions of post-Stone-Age man. His nightmare was that they are returning. Furthermore, Burgess's own model is even more depressing and dehumanising than Orwell's, a fatalism almost oriental in its circularity, with freedom here today and gone tomorrow. True, *1985* takes Orwell seriously and gives him a full discussion. But historically and sociologically Burgess's book is far less convincing than Orwell's. It reads like a rather poor shot at a target on which a greater writer had already landed a bull's eye.

As for *Marxisant* critics, their views converge with Orwell's in the death of capitalism; but they cannot forgive him for discerning a different phoenix above the funeral ashes. The best-known example is Raymond Williams's short book. Theoretically exiguous, it turns mainly on the view that gentlemen should not change their clubs. Williams is much irked by Orwell's failure to predict what he sees as an affluent militarist economy like that of the modern West. This is yet another example of the disingenuous literary Marxist sleight-of-hand which Orwell so detested. "Militarist" and "military" are not synonymous. The USA, so far from being militarist, has notorious difficulties in manning its armed forces. Pentagon mouthpieces are as often vilified as praised by the press. The honest thing is to admit that Orwell's predictions do not generally fit the contemporary West. The dishonest thing is to pretend they do, give or take a few disposable dollars.

Williams is giving vent to the general Marxist view that the liberal values which Orwell upheld are the mere rhetoric of insidious and hidden power-élites. Were Orwell alive today, he would have discerned the persistent spiritual ambiguity which has entered our political vocabulary—Orwell never uses the terms "left" and "right" in his last two books—and everywhere enervated these principles.

Evil as a Political Category

It seems astonishing that Orwell's critics have refused to face the simple truth about this book. It is a moral treatise. Nobody can overlook the fact that its theme is the triumph of evil. What people seem unable to face up to is that it contains a Theory of Evil as a political category.

1984 squarely faces a factor at work in history which has been ignored by most theorists. Search for this category in much of Western thought and all you find is a hole. Even Hobbes, more frightened and aware of evil than most, could deal with it in *Leviathan* only in a separate section, "Of Darkness" being carefully segregated from "Of Man." Earlier, Machiavelli had regarded civilisation as virtually synonymous with the most economic mode of containing evil, yet he has not left us a formal analysis. Nineteenth-century liberals and socialists alike blithely ignored evil. The anarchists treated evil but only in a naive reification which saw it as locked into the institutions of the state.[11] Many of these latter-day thinkers

[11] Though it was crude of Bakunin to hold that "men" are good, and the "state" bad, he was able in his *Statehood and Anarchy* to produce a critique of Marxian socialism and the likely effects of its institutionalisation not unlike a less developed version of *1984*. For a brilliant account, see Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism* (1978), vol. 1, pp. 246-256.

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would have been outraged by the very suggestion that evil was a proper political category.

Not so the Germans, of course. Hegel held, in his general philosophy, that *everything which is* confronts two contradictions: *non-being* (that which is not yet), and *nothingness* (that which can never be and can exist only as a parasite on being, formless, changeless, and with a terrifying asymmetry of its own). Hegel's political philosophy attempts to show the all-pervasive influence of non-being, especially as a dynamic agency at the tragic end of civilisations. His reluctance to integrate nothingness with other parts of his work makes his historical dialectic too successful. By his omission of nothingness, Hegel domesticates, or logically disinfects, evil. In the end the Hegelian state "transcends" the problem.

Orwell, by contrast, admits evil (nothingness, changelessness) into his later work in such a definitive way and on such a colossal scale that as a principle it becomes the dominant mode of political life. Hence the terrifying psychological power of his book. And thus many writers have seemed to be grappling inconsequentially with the trappings thrown around a vision. But they are *not* trappings. They are the logical radials of a theory which is also a warning about what might happen to Western man if he refuses to understand the forces at work within human nature.

Room 101: The Taxonomy of Nightmares

NOT UNTIL its last pages does the book admit us into the icy logical centre of its vision. During the War, Room 101 at the BBC was the base for Orwell's personal experience of producing propaganda; in *1984* Room 101 becomes the symbol of the totalitarian impulse to control every aspect of the human being. To this he added an intimation of a profound international cynicism which might soon encircle the globe. The question remains: what kind of society did Orwell have in mind?

Bernard Crick has suggested that *1984* contains a "wickedly plausible synthesis" of Communism and Nazism. This statement, valid in itself, diverts our attention from the possibility that Orwell is addressing socialism *tout court*, that socialism is stasis, an atavistic fantasy destined to resurrect the past in the future. The difficulty is that there are two Orwells. He is on automatic pilot as a writer, at one level a democrat voicing the liberal pieties of his time; but at another a brilliant theorist swinging way out ahead of them. Since he wrote, we have learned that "liberation" may be the mere rhetoric of the hypertrophy of the state. Is it possible to combine a democratic policy with any kind of socialist economy? The surface Orwell says: "Yes." The deep Orwell screams: "No." Perhaps this is the catastrophism we all fear.

THE MAN who said that the democratic vistas have ended in barbed-wire—that the future could be a boot being pushed into a human face forever—understood far more about political realities than the comfortable radicals of his day. Is he a Christian *manqué*, articulating the limits of a purely secular morality? Surely the answer is at least that in Orwell the artistic visionary triumphs over the shallow surface moralist. In one moment of profound insight, *1984* proclaims that the model for the hegemony of political evil has already been marketed.

The First Circle

We could change to lenten eating,
read in the dead of night
without the central heating
in chairs hard and upright;
cut out smoking, keep
our aims above the belt,
and be disturbed in our sleep
by what Volodin felt.

That for a start. But flush
with bourgeois freedom, fetching
another pint, I lounge on crimson plush,
read till my head grows warm;
then, curled around my guilt, start sketching
a poem in almost academic form.

Richard Kell

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NOTES & TOPICS

A Letter from Germany

Protesting for a Brave, Green World

By Helmut Schoeck

Mainz

THE MEDIA, one would have thought, have enough trouble in the world to be getting on with, without trying to instigate a little more of their own. But so it is when they go about their mammoth investigative reporting, taking some six hours of German television time, to reflect and, if possible, to stir up "The Protest of Youth in a Democratic Society." The ZDF special programme was supposed to look into the causes of discontent and became a causal factor itself. In addition the hearings of the special *Bundestag* commission investigating "youthful protest" were all broadcast live.

If the medium has a message, what then came through? I suspect that from Flensburg on our Danish border to Mittenwald in the Bavarian south any young person who just happened to be modestly content or even tolerably adjusted was suddenly confronted with an overwhelming spectacle of troubles, anxieties and complaints; and even if, for the present, he was not tempted by them, he could see how important a person becomes the moment he gets afflicted and goes public with the tale of woe.

The pictures of the violence and the vandalism are familiar, if only because the television cameras are always there on time to record them. Now the pictures of the open discussions, round-table rappings, and confessional conferences are no less part of our consciousness, although they may contribute more to its lowering than its "raising." One other recent German programme was indeed devoted to the "State of Consciousness among the Youth without a Future." It took two evenings, eight hours in all. And I was struck by the confession, or the "evidence", of one young student:

> "I have to say that I see the future of our society and our world as rather black! . . . First of all, the insane destruction of the environment. If one considers how much of our countryside gets built upon, how much gets destroyed, then I choke up so much I can hardly breathe! Then comes the whole hostility to real life in our growth-societies. That is a major problem which gives me great anxiety. Then there is the armaments race. There are now so many weapons that the earth can be destroyed X times over! And finally the gaps between the industrial nations and the Third World. . . . I think that we young people must take up these problems far more vigorously!"

The left-wing poet Hans Magnus Enzensberger once talked about the "*Bewusstseinsindustrie*"; and here on TV were figures of Youthful Protest who were perfect products of that new industry which has developed to turn out a higher and more sensitive awareness of man's inhumanity to man (or vice versa). Our educational system, together with the cultural atmosphere and the conventional intellectual wisdom, manages to give an almost professional training to young spirits with an aptitude for dissent or a penchant for protest. In a recent children's programme on German radio I heard the following:

The scene was on the edge of a town, and some workers were busy clearing a field and felling some trees. A bunch of children suddenly descended on the workers: "Why must you get rid of those trees?" they cried. The workers replied by saying that the trees had to go because something had to be built there. But, the children cried, we need them to play—without them we won't have air enough to breathe, and we will all suffocate! Then came the sound of the saw, cutting into the bark. And, finally, the children cried out to the workers: "Everybody must die sooner or later, but we hope you'll suffocate! . . ."

IT WOULD BE tedious to go on with examples; but, believe me, we have in Germany been subjected to

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this kind of thing day in, year out, for fifteen years now. It is fed to us, and to our youth and our children, always in "the public interest" by the electronic media, by subsidised youth and children's theatres, and in a great many of our schools avidly following newly-revised syllabi. I don't think it goes too far to say that a new ideal of a "classless society", of a shining world to win, is being sedulously propagated—the new generations are being taught to believe in the Utopia of a brave green world, where nature's naturalness will triumph over all dirt. But then, in the name of the old ideal of a "classless society" it was, one remembers, permitted to kill, purge, and liquidate. And, not dissimilarly, we can observe how this neo-utopianism is beginning to charge up uncontrollable aggressions, especially as the targeted picture of the Enemy becomes one of a ruthless destroyer of the prospect of a good, healthy, happy, clean-lunged life.

One can't help thinking of the "bad old days", when the German people were subjected to a propaganda campaign about being a "*Volk ohne Raum*", a people without space. Now the anxiety is one about becoming a people without oxygen, *ein Volk ohne Sauerstoff*, and it is equally absurd. Let me quote a few statistics which the "*Statistische Bundesamt*" officially released last July. Some 86% of the *Bundesrepublik* of West Germany consists of fields, woods, meadows and waters. The woods alone comprise 30%. (For urban housing and business premises only 6%; for the traffic network 5% of the national territory; and the space for sport, play, etc. comes to some 3%.)

BUT BACK TO our national pastime of grimly contemplating a morosely dissident youth anxiously confronting their future in a land without hope and glory. What, then, is so puzzling about the phenomenon? I find it eminently explicable.

In the first place, I would say that never before in our history have we seen the spectacle of politicians, and pastors, pedagogues and best-selling writers, teachers and hit-songsters, all vying with each other to impress our children with the ugliness of the prospects facing them, with the horror (partly real, partly freely made-up) of all of life's problems that will soon overwhelm them disastrously.

Secondly, all these good men and true, all friends of mankind and its true progress, by constantly parading a thousand insoluble problems of the contemporary world have tried to impress the troubled youth that it is their finest task to proceed to solve them: not to "tinker", not to fall for "partial" plans—but to be "fundamental."

Thirdly, inflated by the exaggerated attention which the public atmosphere has been paying to them, many young people have been led to decide to make an occupation of being the Youth of the day, and to take their sweet good time in conducting their serious long-term attack on all the fundamental problems. (Haste makes waste, and that's what we're trying to get rid of.)

Fourthly. Often involved rather early in "community-style living", or even (as in West Berlin) in squatters' collectives, they brood continuously over the miserable crises which they have been assigned to confront. But at least they are equipped with both eternal youth and a very good social conscience: the "alternative" way of life is, after all, the only one that is real and earnest. (Jobs, salaries, careers go on being continuously postponed.)

Fifth. And yet, and yet . . . there is, I am afraid, no avoiding the growing shadows, as the consciences and temperaments become sicklied o'er with a pallor of procrastination. Certain personal problems which should have been taken up long ago become painfully persistent; and they become more and more difficult to deal with properly. Out of the dissident youth come angry middle-aged men and maladjusted women. It is a generation which has coined a word for it: "*Frust*" (from the English "frustration", a word which presumably never existed in our language before, since we had so much of the thing . . .).

I WOULD BE THE LAST to want to deny that so many of the problems of young people, in Germany and elsewhere in the West, are not of their making, that they are innocents in a world they never made. One has only to mention the dangers of unemployment, indeed of war. But nothing is so misleading as the kind of unhistorical materialism which simple-mindedly equates human anxiety today with economic statistics and armaments tables. As I have been trying to suggest in my analysis, both the pathos and the violence of the "Youth Protest" in the West today have more complex sources, with the disorienting cultural and intellectual atmosphere of the day playing a decisive role.

Think of what happened in Zurich every other week-end during so much of the year 1980! Here, in the purest form, was the phenomenon I have been trying to describe, and also the very model of that neo-Bakuninite delusion about the passion to destroy being a creative passion. Every "alternative way of life" was dreamed up and then submitted to the City Fathers for a generous subvention from the official budget. When Swiss prudence prevailed, thousands of young creative destroyers wandered in protest down the Bahnhofstrasse, smashing every bright window in sight. Anger and *Frust*, no doubt—but in a country with the highest standard of living in Europe, and hardly any

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unemployment at all.

At the risk of impugning the "universality" of my argument—I am sure that it goes for Tokyo and San Francisco as well, when one comes to write the history of the last 15 years—I still am tempted to end on a very "German" note. Was it merely an accident that these Swiss explosions only took place in the German part of Switzerland? Perhaps not. The poor boys and girls of Zurich were really our victims. Post-war progressive German culture gave them a lead, and caught them up in the chic and very efficient "consciousness-industry." For a while we were such good neighbours. But across the border came a new German ideology, and they began to live with it mindlessly.

London Commentary

Unfreedom of the Press

By Edward Pearce

I AM PREDJUDICED, of course, but working in London's Fleet Street reinforces that prejudice with evidence and batters it with personal experience. Response to my earlier piece "Dial M for Murdoch" (May 1982) suggests that the veiled and half-criminal world of newspaper printing continues to fascinate. It is, after all, deeply obscure to the broad public (to the narrow public as well, for that matter) and is surrounded by the same clouds of discretion as the Vatican or the Mafia.

The extent of overmanning, of corrupt practice, of the helpless subordination of middle management, is simply not guessed at. Readers complain, if they receive early editions, that much of what they read is gibberish—lines transposed, lines missing, half-witted misspellings, vowel-swopping, literal strewn upon literal. They should not be surprised, nor should they blame journalists or copy-takers.[1] A misprint in an early edition is a correction in a later edition (and for corrections the employer pays). At one or other of the stations of feebleness which mark the progress of the hired managements of Fleet Street to their particular cross, this has been conceded. As a consequence a type-setter's bonus turns upon work conscientiously ill-done and a first edition full of uncompleted sentences and caliban words. Most newspapers mark their editions by stars—one for the first, two for the second and so on, at the top of the front page. By doing so they publish their own involuntary Michelin guide. Never buy a one-star edition in the hope of reading English.

The grotesquery of payment for vandalism, like all the other "old Spanish practices" (as they are called in the trade), is a product of the vulnerability of the industry. A day's car-production cost can be made up, but not four editions of the *Daily Express* for 17 January 1980. And of course the various unions—NGA, NATSOPA, SOGAT and the vilest of all, SLADE, rarely need to obtain what they want by anything so crude as a strike. Even when it is the intention of the union chapel to stop production, they do not lose pay or involve themselves in making strike-payments to their members.

The main unions will with due solemnity and a straight face go through the necessary motions of abiding by all they are "contracted" to do. Like Gilbert's Lord Chancellor they are without fault or flaw (and most assuredly in a newspaper office they embody the law), but at the last minute the electricians, a handful of men in a rigorously demarked trade, will pull the plugs. They alone will lose earnings (made up by a whip-round among the lads) and so a day's edition dies.

To obtain grateful submission from management it is not often necessary to go so far. Newspapers are printed on great rolls; rolls break, they have been known to break 50 times in an hour. Union meetings can be convened in work time (another concession made by the sad shadows called management); they *are* convened, and schedules dictated by the rigid timetable of British Rail fall apart. Early morning newspaper conferences frequently concern themselves with fruitless contemplation of the 200,000 copies lost the night before. Citizens far away confront newsagents who

[1] Copy-takers (transcribing telephoned copy) are the best of men, erudite through their trade, likely to take civil issue on a fine point of syntax or grammar about which they know more than most journalists.

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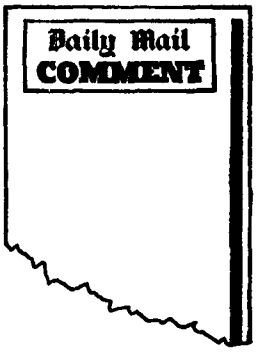
spread out their hands in the despair of men to whom papers come on sufferance and as a favour. And as I spelt out in my last piece on the press, the men responsible for so much extortion, destruction, and villainy are paid more than the editors of the best papers.

BUT WHILE THE PRINTERS (and, far worse, the "Saturday-night casuals": the men hired by the union for despatch and similar work for Sunday papers) let the papers' blood, it takes two to bleed. The inadequacy of management is most eloquently expressed by the simple fact that it does not hire the men who do or do not work for them. The notorious overmanning of Fleet Street occurs because unions, not management, decide how many and whom. Incidentally, it is confusing to speak of "the unions." The leaders of the newspaper unions were elegantly dismissed by a great reporter as "the emperors in their summer palaces." Sitting out in distant and agreeable headquarters like Bedford they, no more than the management, have control or relevance when the roll breaks or the plug is pulled. These are local plant delinquencies, and if the General Secretary of a big union actually wanted to affect them he would be shown to the loading bay. Power is in the hands of "the chapels", headed by the "fathers of the chapels", names given in another age of trade unionism in allusion to English religious Nonconformity.

The various unions operate under the chairmanship of a grand wizard curiously known as "the Father of the Imperial Chapel." The rule you go by is that in any conflict between him and the management, the management will be spat out like pips. They have historically surrendered so much, systematically failed to stand together with other papers in a common front, but have competed to be the first to concede in the hope of a little extra circulation while another paper struggled on for a day or two's loss-making resistance. The only examples of decisiveness have come occasionally from strong managing editors, dealing with the journalistic staff. My own Fleet Street paper benefited from just such a managing editor who scaled down an over-manned payroll of pressmen by sheer force of personality; but *he* was not management, and his writ only ran with journalists. While the sins of journalists are many—a sizeable fraud operating in bogus expenses and hedonistic expectations, fed by first-class travel and hotels—we are small potatoes as costs. And, by and large, we do a job of work with roughly the numbers needed to get it done. Newsrooms do not operate with a hundred men watching a couple of dozen at work.

UNTIL VERY RECENTLY, Fleet Street newspapers and their corrupt, wasteful system of production seemed to have a long lease on immortality. First there were high-minded Canadians who wanted the privilege of running a national institution, then there were low-minded Australians who

A Case of Insidious Censorship



THE British Press Council in London issued the following statement on 29 September:

"The Press Council has previously condemned the use of pressure by newspaper trade unions to prevent publication of material to which they or their members objected. The Council condemns equally any union, chapel, or any other group exerting pressure to force a newspaper to publish material against the will of its Editor.

In July, printing trade unions and some of their chapels were, like many other trade unions and trade unionists, anxious to demonstrate their support for the Health Service workers' pay claim.

There was nothing improper in this or in those unions and groups offering statements of their support for editorial publication or placing advertisements announcing it.

CLEAR or implied threats to interfere with newspaper production in several offices unless the statements were published were a different matter. The use of, or attempt to use, this duress was wholly improper and unjustifiable. The hijacking of a newspaper's columns is as indefensible in a free society as their censorship.

MUCH LATER *the "Daily Mail", in London, and the "Daily Post", Liverpool, were published on September 21 and September 23 respectively with blank spaces in place of their leading articles because workers in their offices objected to views put forward in the missing leaders.*

WHATEVER those newspapers' views and however sincerely felt the objections to them, the effective censorship of opinion columns in this way was inexcusable .... Newspaper industry workers and trade unions are not in a special, privileged position in regard to publication of material of which they are critical. Their rights are no greater and no less than those of the rest of the public.

No one should usurp an editor's responsibility to the public and to the law for what appears in his newspaper."

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wanted to ripple their pectorals. There has always been a queue of ill-advised rich men, their fortunes made in digital alarm clocks or paper bags, who would be known to want a newspaper because of the old delusion shared by the Left and by the men in the queue, that Newspaper Ownership confers glory. What it largely confers these days is steady and assured financial loss. The best owners hang on out of family duty or a wish to at least wrestle with the problem. But ultimately all the great buildings of Fleet Street have one sovereign utility—they can be sold! Otherwise ownership is a bed of broken glass. The changeover to computer printing continues to wait just as the changeover to simple web offset printing waited. New technologies grow old because unions do not permit, and managements do not defy.

Readers of John Updike will remember a passage in *Rabbit Redux* in which Harry Angstrom loses his job as a printer through technological change:

> "'So no linotypers, huh?' . . . 'I thought I made that point. That's part of the technical picture, that's where the economy comes. Offset you operate all from film, bypass hot metal entirely. Go to a cathode-ray tube. Christ, it delivers two thousand lines a minute. . . .' So Rabbit asks 'So when do I go?' 'You'll get the two months pay, plus the benefits you've accumulated, but the new press is coming in this weekend, faster than we thought, everything moves faster nowadays.'"

Updike, writing in 1970, was describing an event meant to have occurred in 1968! The gap between Britain and the US in adaptability, in terms of who is in charge, has not yet been counted in years. For in London hot metal and union chapels still rule. Where new technology has been conceded, the advantage has been zero; the *Daily Mirror*, having made the switch, now employs more members of the National Graphical Association than in its hot-metal days.

In consequence the British press, at least the national press, is facing terminal conditions. Only the real-estate value of the office buildings is an asset. *The Times* costs 20 pence—four shillings in old money—and loses money: I would not give it 18 months. Nobody is safe. Nobody has a job he can bank on. And of course the newspapers have actually declined in quality. Foreign correspondents grow fewer, reprinted agency copy increases. We don't have money left to spend on the things we should spend money on. The Emperors in their Summer Palaces, the proprietors, like men stranded in a desert, the management—who have office cars and carpeted rooms and not an iron filing's worth of authority, the flushed hacks and the sober hacks, even the linotype operators, are facing the end. It will not be the crisp death and

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resurrection of Rabbit Angstrom but a seedy crumbling, counterpointed with vainglory like the *Mail*'s fatuous doomed venture of a Sunday paper to fill "spare capacity"—capacity not matched by spare demand. The fools who want to buy grow few, and for the shrewd men there is only a finite amount of office space to trade.

THE REMOTE HOPE should be outside London. If one wanted to own a British newspaper there would be more sense in buying up the Leicester *Mercury*, the Sheffield *Telegraph* or the Newcastle *Journal* and expanding outwards, than in the face-crushing exercise of fighting the Fleet Street unions. As I pointed out in my earlier ENCOUNTER article, when one damns printers, one is damning *London* printers. London is a corrupt city, and its inner bastion, the City of London, particularly so. (Not for nothing are the City of London Police notably more corrupt even than the Metropolitan Police who serve Greater London.)

A provincial paper worked by men not habituated to the almost Roman assumptions of graft and parasitism which run from St Paul's to Temple Bar, but a provincial paper which set out to sell nationally while accommodating the native city with its own edition, would have a fresh start. It need not be the creature of British Rail but using facsimile stations could distribute from a dozen local centres whose perimeters would touch one another. Provincially printed, road-delivered, electronically set, it might even have some money left to be a good newspaper.

Everyone in this country talks about technology (not too much happens); and everyone talks about decentralisation. Put the two together—kick your heels clean of dirty London where men three stone overweight stand on the front step of newspapers hard at work—buy no national paper, spend no money on redundancy, none on ghost shifts or threefold overmanning—spend on capital expenditure and promotion, and on nice non-union Asian van-drivers. And hold your thrusting provincial ready for when the first Fleet Street death makes a hole in the national market. It shouldn't be long now.

Hannah Arendt, Personally

Light on the Life of a Philosopher—By MAURICE CRANSTON

WHEN HANNAH ARENDT received, fairly late in life, her first university appointment, an interviewer asked her how she felt being a woman professor; she answered briskly: "I am not disturbed at all because I am quite used to being a woman." However, in a letter to her husband, some months later, she told him she was "not cut out for this kind of life. All the time I feel . . . overwhelmed by the cares and anxieties of other people. I really cannot appear in public five times a week."

As a political philosopher, Hannah Arendt was a tireless champion of the public realm over the domestic; as a person, she was intensely reserved, reticent, private. This is what makes the biography[1] of her by Elisabeth Young-Bruehl so interesting; it unveils the secrets, and throws a good deal of light on things that must bewilder any reader of Hannah Arendt's books, which are so marvellously good in some parts and so mysteriously bad in others.

In the story of her youth there is something Ibsenesque: a fierce, ardent spirit rebelling against the sombre Baltic bourgeois milieu of Königsberg in the twilight of the Second Reich. Hannah Arendt was born in 1906, the only child of prosperous, cultured Jewish parents. It was not an easy upbringing. At home, from the age of five, she had to watch her father succumb to the effects of syphilis, witnessing what she afterwards spoke of as his "entire horrible transformation." At school, she was tormented by anti-Semitism. All Jewish children experienced this, she recalled: "The difference with me lay in the fact that my mother always insisted that I not humble myself. One must defend oneself. . . ." From defence she passed to attack. Wounded one day by a remark made by a teacher at the Luiseschule, Hannah led a boycott by all the other girls of that teacher's class, with the result that she was expelled.

Private study in Berlin, however, enabled her to pass the entrance examination to the university a year earlier than the girls she had left behind at

[1] *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World.* By ELISABETH YOUNG-BRUEHL. Yale University Press, $25.00, £12.95.

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school. On her own, she took to writing poetry and reading philosophy. Already at the age of seventeen she discovered Kierkegaard, and was converted to Existentialism. Not surprisingly, when she enrolled at Marburg University, she responded with all the eagerness of a romantic *Backfisch* to the more extreme and systematic form of existentialism that was being taught there by Martin Heidegger; Heidegger had recently established himself, at the age of thirty-five, as the leader of a fashionable young movement in revolt against the traditional rationalism of the German philosophical faculties. Years later Hannah Arendt explained the appeal of Heidegger in these words:

> "People followed the rumour about Heidegger in order to learn thinking. What was experienced was that thinking, as pure activity . . . can become a passion which not so much rules and oppresses all other capacities and gifts, as it orders them and prevails through them. We are so accustomed to the old opposition of reason versus passion, spirit versus life, that the idea of a passionate thinking, in which aliveness and thinking become one, takes us somewhat aback."

In Hannah Arendt's own case, it was not only the thinking that was passionate: there was also the feeling. She fell in love with Heidegger. Her hero—the "hidden king", as she called him, "who reigned in the realm of thinking"—became her lover. It was an ill-starred affair and it could not last, for the "hidden king" was all too visible as a lower-middle-class German family-man in *Lederhosen* with a Nazi wife and two sons; and he had not the least intention of sacrificing everything, or anything, for the sake of an undergraduate (beautiful as Hannah Arendt at that time undoubtedly was) who could only ruin his career with her liberated attitudes and unconventional ways and her intensity, as well as her "Jewishness", a quality which was coming to be increasingly important to her in her conception of herself, and less attractive to him as his philosophy of the arbitrary choice propelled him further and further along the road to making the choice for Hitler in 1933.

Mrs Young-Bruehl has not, unfortunately, had access to the Heidegger archive where the very many love-letters which passed between the philosopher and his pupil are preserved; and so, for want of detail, she cannot tell us much about the progress of the affair. Even so, it is clear from what she does disclose that Heidegger never ceased to have a special place in some corner of Hannah Arendt's heart. Some years after they parted, she discovered the diaries of Rahel Varnhagen, a Jewish woman poet of the German romantic period, who had been rejected by the great love of her life, Graf von Finckenstein, because that nobleman could not accept someone "so different" from his own kind. Hannah Arendt saw herself in Rahel, and went on to write a book about her, *Rahel Varnhagen: the Life of a Jewess* (1958). It is as much autobiography as biography, informed not only by memories of Heidegger, but of Hannah Arendt's subsequent and more aristocratic lover, Benno von Wiese und Kaiserwaldau (he left her after an affair of two years to marry a Christian bride).

THE SUBJECT OF Hannah Arendt's Ph.D. thesis was Saint Augustine, and she was sensible enough, in view of her relationship with Heidegger, to seek a supervisor elsewhere. She was lucky enough, in moving from Marburg to Heidelberg to find Karl Jaspers, another existentialist of the day, a less dry and demanding philosopher than Heidegger, but a better and nicer man. Jaspers became her teacher, and a life-long friend. Having a Jewish wife, Jaspers understood Hannah Arendt's feelings about anti-Semitism and the rising Nazism. What he could not quite understand was why she was so tolerant of Heidegger. Only when Heidegger joined the Nazi party and made unmistakably Nazi public speeches did Hannah Arendt stop seeing him; until 1929, as Mrs Young-Bruehl writes, "whenever Heidegger wrote to her suggesting that she meet him, [she] left her work, her friends, her obligations, to go. . . ."

It was at this point that she settled down with the man who became her first husband, Günther Stern, the son of two celebrated psychologists. Stern aspired, as she did, to an academic career, but was unfortunate enough to submit his project for a *Habilitationschrift* at Frankfurt, where the presence of such attractive, brilliant scholars as Paul Tillich, Dolf Sternberger and Karl Mannheim seemed welcoming to both Stern and Hannah Arendt. However, Stern had chosen to work on the philosophy of music, which inevitably brought him at Frankfurt up against the professor who specialised in the sociology of music, Theodor Adorno. According to Mrs Young-Bruehl,

> ". . . it was not surprising that Adorno would find Stern's work, which approached the matter of musical theory from an angle not at all Marxist, unsatisfactory. Hannah Arendt was never sympathetic to the Frankfurt School Marxism on intellectual grounds, and this episode was only the first of a series which made personal sympathy unlikely . . . and she clearly meant it when she announced to Günther Stern after having made Adorno's acquaintance: *'Der kommt uns nicht im Haus'*. . . ."

Hannah Arendt mistrusted Adorno for changing

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his Jewish-sounding name, Wiesengrund, for his mother's family name; and later she condemned what she called his "unsuccessful attempt at co-operation" with the Nazi régime.

Hannah Arendt and Stern left Frankfurt for Berlin where their domestic life was far from affluent. They had to live in a one-room studio which was used in the daytime by a dancing school and which housed a permanent collection of sculptures in the *Bauhaus* style. It was not conducive to philosophical research, and indeed, as the Weimar Republic sped towards ruin, they both turned from what she called "introspection" to "action", he in the direction of Communism, she towards Zionism.

She developed her interest in Zionism under the influence of Karl Blumenfeld, a father-figure whom she described as her "mentor in politics." She got from him the idea, which she elaborated years later in her book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), that there are two types of Jew in the Western world: the "pariah", who is persecuted and kept out of Christian society, and the "parvenu", who is assimilated, accepted, admitted. She made it her business to attack the "parvenus", who had no basis (she felt) for their opposition to anti-Semitism in taking their place in a society which was anti-Semitic. This did not make her very popular in some sections of the Jewish community.

But quarrels among Jews were pushed aside by the events of the early 1930s. After the *Reichstag* fire, Stern, predicting a purge of Communists, fled from Germany at once; his wife helped others on the Left to escape until the day she herself was arrested by a *Gestapo* officer; only her wits and her charm saved her, and she was able to escape, through Prague, to France:

> "I arrived at the conclusion which I always at the time expressed to myself in one sentence, which clarified it to me, 'when one is attacked as a Jew, one must defend oneself *as a Jew*.' Not as a German, not as a world-citizen, not as an upholder of the Rights of Man."

AS A REFUGEE in France between 1933 and 1941, Hannah Arendt dedicated herself to "practical work—exclusively and only Jewish work." She resumed her life with Stern, but the flame of their love had died, and when he left for America in 1936, they were promptly divorced. She found herself office jobs in Paris with Zionist organisations which were training young Jews to work with their hands in Palestine or helping children to emigrate. The "charitable" nature of the work irked her: she wanted to make it more political, to protest and to act. She worked for people like the Rothschilds, and was dismayed when such well-established French Jews, benevolent and generous as they were, tried to restrain the attempts of immigrant Eastern Jews to develop a political consciousness and active anti-Nazi protests. She had no patience with the discretion of the "parvenus", foreseeing—correctly—that it would not save them when the Nazis conquered.

In Paris Hannah Arendt met and married her second husband, another man of the Left, Heinrich Blücher. Whereas Stern had come from a milieu like her own, Jewish, bourgeois, and academic, Blücher was a Gentile and a working-class autodidact; yet it was evidently a successful and happy marriage that lasted until Blücher's death in 1970. He had at one time been more of a Communist than Stern had ever been, but was now what he liked to call a "former Communist" to distinguish himself from the "ex-Communists" considered by him (and by Hannah Arendt) to be too rigidly and ideologically anti-Communist.

From what Mrs Young-Bruehl says about him, it is hard to make out exactly what Blücher believed in politics, or what influence he had on Hannah Arendt, who obviously enjoyed discussing ideas with him for hours at a time, and who appreciated his *fauve* intelligence, unconstrained by the elaborate classical education that she had herself received. One is prompted to suppose he must have been responsible for the unworldly Leninist history which appears on the section on "Imperialism" in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, since it sits so incongruously beside the excellent section on anti-Semitism in that same book.

She seems also to have taken some of her husband's other ideas—residues of the Spartacist fantasy of workers- and soldiers-councils enabling the proletariat to rule itself—and put them together with her own Zionist vision of the *kibbutzim* as models of property-sharing democracy to produce one of the central themes of her mature political philosophy, which was (as she always liked to insist) "revolutionary", but which looked back to a long-lost world of small agrarian communities as the basis of its realisation. Although she worked full-time in Zionist organisations, she had no desire to see a nation-state of Israel come into being: she wanted a federation of independent Jewish societies parallel to Arab ones, associated in turn with a British Empire turned into a commonwealth and a Europe changed into yet another federation.

IF HER LANGUAGE was sometimes Marx's, her ideas were closer to Proudhon's. Her conception of freedom, which came to be much admired, was virtually identical with that put forward by Rousseau and described by Benjamin Constant as "ancient freedom", by which Constant meant that the conception of freedom as a group of people

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ruling itself actively could only make sense in the context of the small city-state of the ancient world, while the modern world of kingdoms and vast populations needed "modern freedom", namely, freedom understood as the individual's right to do what he wanted provided he did not injure others. Constant complained, very reasonably, that Rousseau's attempt to revive "ancient freedom" would kill "modern freedom" without "ancient freedom" being unable effectively to replace it.

Rousseau, of course, could plead that his idea of freedom made sense in the modern city-state of Geneva. Hannah Arendt could only dream of Palestine taking the sort of shape that her theories would demand, or of the whole trend of modern nation-building to be put into reverse. This meant that she—again like Rousseau—often looked more of a reactionary than a revolutionary; and she was often described as such by her more progressive critics in America.

SHE REACHED America with her second husband at the beginning of 1941, and was soon joined by her mother, all three of them having been lucky enough to survive the internment and other ordeals in France during the *drôle de guerre*, the so-called "phoney war." She responded enthusiastically to America as a civil society. She noted—shrewdly—the difference between political America—moulded in its 18th-century constitution—and social America, living in the 20th (and often, as she put it, in the 19th) century. This distinction between the social and the political, neglected by most philosophers, became a central one in Hannah Arendt's theorising, and I think one cannot deny that she proved the value of it. Whether Hannah Arendt really understood America is another question. In New York, at any rate, for the first few years she seems to have moved only in a very tiny circle of exiled German Jews, writing for the German-language periodical *Aufbau*, agitating for the creation of a Jewish Army, and working in Zionist politics (where she seems to have found herself very often in a minority of one).

When news of the *Endlösung*, the Final Solution, being put into effect by the Nazis reached New York in the winter of 1942–3, hers was one of the most eloquent voices demanding "an end to the conspiracy of silence" in the Allied countries concerning what was happening in Nazi-occupied Europe. At the same time, she alienated many Jews in America by her attacks on the Zionist leadership. Even so, her failure in practical politics was compensated by a return to scholarship, to philosophy and the history of ideas. Her husband did various odd War-time jobs—as a broadcaster or instructor for the US Army (his Communist

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Party past seeming no hindrance here)—and evidently found satisfaction in doing them. He was incapable of sustained research or writing; but Hannah Arendt was born for it, and she really only found her true place in the world when she settled down at the age of 39 at the end of the War to write *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. In fits and starts, her husband helped her.

It remains an uneven book, but impressive and stimulating; and despite the Leninistic analysis of imperialism, it treats the Third Reich and the Soviet Union as instances of the same phenomenon of totalitarianism. It is also free from any naive empiricist notion of causality in history, and in looking for "origins", seeks only to locate the factors which led up to totalitarianism and make it intelligible. The non-ideological character of the book disappointed some progressive critics, and marked the beginning of Hannah Arendt's reputation as a conservative. This was not diminished by her second book of political theory, *The Human Condition* (1958), which for all its Existentialist inspiration, looked back to the Greeks for its understanding of the public and the private, the political and social, the city and the household.

WHEN SHE APPLIED her theories to practice in articles on the subject of racial integration in Southern schools, Hannah Arendt alienated the progressives even more. Her argument was that political action should be directed to strictly political objectives. She pleaded for the abolition of the laws against miscegenation since those laws violated the civil right of the citizen to contract a lawful marriage. The American liberals refused to press this as they considered it futile, but instead demanded the integration of children into Southern white schools by the force of Federal law. Hannah Arendt argued both that this policy violated states' rights which were an integral part of the American Federal constitution, and that it was an intrusion by the political into the social realm. Social equality, she insisted, cannot be enforced; it was only necessary to keep discrimination "within the social sphere, where it is legitimate, and prevent its trespassing on the political. . . ." She also objected to the liberals calling on children to be heroes: and she protested that compulsory desegregation only put the "black child into a more humiliating position than it had been before."

Even more of a sensation was caused by the articles Hannah Arendt wrote in, of all places, *The New Yorker* on the trial of Eichmann in Jerusalem. Here she was to some extent the victim of her style. Her justification for writing journalism at all was that of writing polemically, and she had built up over the years a good deal of impatience with the Zionist leadership and majority Zionist opinion. She intended to be provocative, but she did not measure the provocation she caused.

Two things she said in those articles (and in the book that followed) distressed many readers. She insisted on what she called the "banality" of Eichmann: he was not a monster, but a commonplace man "unable to tell right from wrong." Her view was that the monstrosity lay not in Eichmann but in the whole Nazi régime where criminal acts committed by thousands were the rule and were normal, and where only "exceptions" were what we should call "normal." (My own view is that she was right about this, but that she put a good argument in the wrong kind of words.) Secondly, she gave offence by accusing the leaders of Jewish communities in Occupied Europe of participating in the work of extermination by registering and handing over Jews to the Nazis instead of calling for resistance. This strikes me as a grossly unfair charge, given the veil of ignorance behind which the Jewish leaders operated. A mouse in a cat-and-mouse situation may perhaps survive by its wits, but it is absurd to urge it to take to the counter-attack (although there were, as her critics pointed out to her, many cases of revolt and uprising in the camps).

BUT, THEN, Hannah Arendt was always rather unsteady on the subject of violence. She praised Castro's use of force in Cuba, and the Hungarian insurrection in 1956, but was deeply attached to the idea of non-violence, and was curiously thrilled by the events in France in 1968 because no lives were lost in the whole of the Sorbonne students' attempt at a revolution. She wrote to Daniel Cohn-Bendit (whose father had been interned with her in 1940): "I am quite sure that your parents, and especially your father, would be very pleased with you if they were alive now. . . ." The only disappointment to her was that there was no real national revolution in France in 1968—but only a continuing agitation against discipline and authority in the world's universities, so that Dr Arendt found, in becoming a professor at just that time, that all the old classical ideals of scholarship, which she prized highly, were being thrown overboard to please the followers of Daniel Cohn-Bendit on campuses almost everywhere. The "revolution" came, where she thought it least needed, in the universities. Then once again she lived up to her reputation as a conservative, opposing "open admissions" policies and the introduction of "Black Studies" which lowered academic standards, "self-grading", "action Ph.D.'s" and other such innovations which were supposed to "liberalise" higher education.

THE VIET NAM WAR, however, put Hannah Arendt in the last twenty years of her life once

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more in the company of the Left. It is not altogether clear how she perceived that war. As one opposed to violence, she wanted the war to end, and she subscribed to the pacifist Fellowship of Reconciliation. On the other hand, she evidently desired the régime of Ho Chi Minh to win the war. Indeed, the so-called Peace Movement in America from 1965 onwards was rapidly transformed into a movement for the victory of the Vietnamese communists, and Hannah Arendt's ambiguous attitude to the Viet Nam war was by no means unusual. It is not clear from Mrs Young-Bruehl's book to what extent Hannah Arendt imagined that the régime in North Viet Nam satisfied her own criteria of a self-ruling civil society. Nevertheless, she must have approved of it, or she could not have taken the satisfaction she did in witnessing the defeat of the Saigon government and the débâcle of the US forces. To a non-American reader like myself, her impassioned attacks on the US policy in Viet Nam in articles she wrote for *The New York Review of Books* and elsewhere were always perplexing: violence in words is a bad rejoinder to violence in deeds.

Mrs Young-Bruehl recalls a public debate in which Hannah Arendt took part with Noam Chomsky and Conor Cruise O'Brien in 1967. She spoke against violence then, but afterwards recalled approvingly an Irish saying (quoted by O'Brien) about violence sometimes being "the only way of ensuring a hearing for moderation." It was a dangerous thought to have put into her head. As Camus points out in his *Lettre à un ami allemand*, and as the career of Heidegger might well have taught Hannah Arendt, Existentialists, who recognise no natural law, are not to be trusted with violence.

In 1970, Hannah Arendt became a widow. Her husband, who could not write books, found he could teach, and had proved himself a popular professor at a liberal arts college. She herself joined the faculty of the New School of Social Research in New York, ironically an offshoot of the Frankfurt Institute brought to America by her old enemy, T. W. Adorno. Even so, she had broken out of the circle of German exiles in which she had moved in her earlier years in New York. She became a close friend of many Anglo-Saxons and Christians, including Mary McCarthy, who edited her posthumous works, and of W. H. Auden, who came in his tramp's clothes to propose marriage to her soon after her husband's death. She had once taken Auden to a store to force him to buy a second suit, but she did not want to do so regularly. "I had to turn him down", Hannah Arendt wrote to Mary McCarthy. "I think I never knew anybody who aroused my pity to this extent."

Hannah Arendt, as a person, inspired great

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affection in people who came to know her. Her biographer is one of her former pupils, and the book is in no way the worse for being prompted by love. Newspaper reviewers have complained that the book contains too much "gossip": but if there is much "talk about the affairs of other people" (taking this as the definition of gossip), it is nowhere ill-natured, and it is really what was wanted: not a great work of critical literature but a mine of vivid information.

Letter from Paris

Ladurie's Lament

By François Fejtö

Paris

THE intellectual autobiography published by Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie (professor at the Collège de France, one of the most eminent historians of the "French school", and the author of the bestseller *Montaillou*) has come as a general surprise.[1] People had forgotten that Le Roy Ladurie, who comes from a Catholic family of the old Right—before joining the *Résistance*, his father was a Vichy minister—had followed so many others of his generation into the coils of the French Communist Party. In his book he tries, as a historian, to explain the reasons for his conversion, and his subsequent disenchantment. His explanations are particularly striking because he joined the Party in 1948–9, at a time when, alarmed by the anti-Tito campaign, the Budapest and Sofia "show trials", and the increased level of totalitarian intolerance in the Western Communist parties, a number of intellectuals had begun to break away.

Now the reasons adduced by Ladurie are very much the same as those which Ignazio Silone made familiar in his own day: basically they are religious and moral. His joining the Party is quite simply explained by a young intellectual's *besoin de croire*, a need to believe. It was this need which took him from Pétain to Stalin. Perhaps some elementary psychoanalysis could be of help. Ladurie had had an antagonistic relationship with his father and with his family. More than that, he had been too young to belong to the *Résistance* (though had he done so, he would probably have joined the Party sooner). The fact is that like so many of his contemporaries it was in the *khagne*, the class of arts students preparing for entry to the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, in the rue d'Ulm, that he encountered communism in its most seductive guise, as a gnosis, an initiation into the secrets of the world. The CP was "the greatest party in France", the "*parti des fusillés*", *le parti de la renaissance nationale* and of the most superior cultural figures: Picasso, Aragon, Joliot-Curie. It was the party which had the good fortune to be celebrating the 70th birthday of the mighty Stalin, which rejoiced at the victory of the Chinese Revolution, and which spurned the faint of heart. History was on its side.

What is interesting is that while Ladurie may have been a naive believer, he was not an ignorant one. He had read Jean-Paul Sartre's *Les mains sales*, and knew the writings of Boris Souvarine as well as Leon Trotsky; but he had forgotten them, for he had changed his "life strategy." Knowledge is not enough to alter a powerful *Weltanschauung*, not even in a thoughtful scholar. Ladurie relates how Jacques Le Goff, another future historian of distinction, returned from Prague horrified by the circumstances of the coup of February 1948 and reported on the police harassment of students at Charles University, which he had seen himself. His story produced no effect. "*Ils ont des oreilles et n'entendent pas.* (They have ears and do not hear)." They did not want to know.

In those days, one student in four at the *Ecole Normale* was a member of the Communist cell. (According to Jean-François Revel, a few years earlier the Party's influence had been very much weaker.) It took the Cold War for a new generation to import the taste for a hard doctrine, if not exactly a pure one. Ladurie met men like Michel Foucault (of whom he notes that he was much less zealous than others for the excesses of Stalinism, and was already plunged into the researches which were to lead to his major book on madness some years later) and François Furet, who even then was interested in the history of the French Revolution (and unlike his comrade Albert Soboul did not share Mathiez's Robespierrist, Leninist interpretation of the Revolution). He also met Louis Althusser (a young assistant lecturer) and his wife Hélène, and came to witness a drama whose mood recalls that of the situations previously analysed by the novelist Paul Nizan. Hélène was accused of having "dubious" acquaintances—Trotskyists, Spanish Republicans, et al. The order came down from above to the committee of the Communist cell of the *École Normale* to get Althusser to part from his wife. After some

[1] Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Paris-Montpellier, PC-PSU, 1945–63* (Gallimard).

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heartbreak, the young philosopher resolved to comply.

> "He announced, totally shattered, head in hands, conforming to the prearranged scenario, that yes, of course, in the end he would break with Hélène. We heard these words in a religious silence, feeling simultaneously embarrassed, relieved, and perhaps vaguely ashamed of ourselves, though on this last point I am not altogether sure. . . ."

Later on, an arrangement was reached and Althusser was authorised to resume his relationship; but that was the first time that he proved that, for him, being a Communist was more than a mere sacrifice of intellect. Ladurie notes, incidentally, that it came as a big surprise to him when he learned through the press in the 1960s that Louis Althusser—a nice young man, and intelligent enough, of course, but no genius—had become "*un grand philosophe*." In fact he knew all his books, and did not have the impression that they amounted to any considerable body of work. "One of Althusser's principal contributions", he suggests (and how right he is), "consisted in providing a very subtle justification of the Party's crypto-Stalinist practice. . . ."[2]

BEYOND THE CELL in the rue d'Ulm, in the *Quartier Latin*, the Communist students were then directed by a commission run by the stern hand of Annie Besse (who married again, and is better known as Annie Kriegel). She was in overall charge of the Communist intellectuals of the Seine. After her break with the CP in 1956, Annie became its most rigorous scholarly historian, and also what her friend Le Roy Ladurie calls "an expiatory victim, *chargée de tous ses péchés*. . . ." Ladurie comes staunchly to the defence of Annie Kriegel, whose former comrades still remain furiously critical of her fanatical inquisitorial conduct during the 1950s.

> "Annie took the lessons of de-Stalinisation to their logical conclusion and that was to everyone's advantage. Those intellectuals who had settled cosily into a 'soft' communism which they have not abandoned to this day, or in their lifetime, have never forgiven the former militant for having shown up their errors not once, but twice. First by forcing to its final point, the point of absurdity, the infernal logic of their own aberrations, which they wanted to keep tame, and which her own practice demonstrated to be symbolically blood-thirsty. . . . And in the second place, Annie proved on the contrary, by her brave self-criticism, the inanity of these aberrations."

The Party's leadership was not satisfied with having control of the minds of the future trained in the rue d'Ulm, the future élite of the nation. It used their naive (or, rather, gullible) enthusiasm to organise the young *normaliens* into odious provocations against Trotskyist or Titoist meetings, giving vent to a hysteria which was "provoked, ordered, remote-controlled, and shared by the Party leadership."

THE QUASI-MONASTIC ISOLATION in which Ladurie and his generational comrades lived during the 1950s probably explains how they remained immune to outside influences for so long. It was in a more open world, in Montpellier, that as a young university teacher Ladurie had to confront the first waves of de-Stalinisation. He gave back his Party card at the end of 1956, in order to join the *Parti socialiste unifié* (*PSU*), whose aim was to combine the dissatisfied socialists of the *SFIO* with the disenchanted Communists of the CP. The next stage was a kind of social-liberalism:

> "It became clear to me that the opposition between freedom and totalitarianism was in the long run more important than the old Left-Right contrast."

It is in the light of this logic that Le Roy Ladurie judges the socialist-communist experiment now in progress in France. He is unable to accept granting the CP a democratic character and legitimacy which is not its own, by bringing it into the government. He passes a stern judgment on the Mitterrand Socialist Party whose dominant wing, he argues, "is extending a state monopoly over the field of economics and information", and which has set in motion

> "a process of cultural intoxication which may possibly turn out to be more dangerous than economic centralisation. What is threatened is not necessarily freedom, but truth."

Obviously Le Roy Ladurie has remained as much a militant as ever.

[2] See, in ENCOUNTER (October 1973), Sidney Hook's "For Louis Althusser."

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MY TWO FAVOURITE EXAMINATION howlers are as follows. Q. Why are the Terrible Sonnets of Gerard Manley Hopkins "terrible"? A. Because the poor chap never really learned the art of prosody. And: Q. What, in your opinion, is the best book produced by a literary collaboration? A. *Our Life in the Indian Hills* by the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava. The first is genuine and was told me by Leonée Ormond, a lecturer in English at London University. The second must be apocryphal—though I suppose the candidate might have had vaguely in mind that movie in which a queenly Grace Kelly vies with a provocative, jut-breasted Ava Gardner for the brusque attentions of Clark Gable.

Presumably the yearned-for answer to the first question was "Because he had a sex identity problem." And the answer to the second question might have been Liddell and Scott, for their *Lexicon*; Somerville and Ross, for *Experiences of an Irish RM*; or even Sellar and Yeatman, for *1066 and All That*. But my vote would go unhesitatingly to Hugh Honour and John Fleming. Individually, they have made valuable contributions to art history: Honour on chinoiserie, Venice, neo-classicism and Romanticism; Fleming on Robert Adam and his Circle. Together, they wrote virtually the whole of the *Connoisseur Encyclopaedia of Antiques* in the 1950s; their *Penguin Dictionary of Decorative Arts* (1977) made the *Oxford Companion to the Decorative Arts* look thoroughly amateurish; and now their new *World History of Art*[1] scatters to the winds all previous attempts at a conspectus of art history.

One might of course question the whole *raison d'être* of this kind of book. What justification is there for an *omnium gatherum* in which the world's wildly heterogeneous masterpieces are hurtled together, pell-mell, as if looted by a discriminating gang of thieves and thrust into a pantechnicon? One knows that books of this kind sell: happy, avaricious smiles wreathe publishers' faces when they suggest this sort of enterprise—the same faces as resume their usual sullen vacancy when any really original and intelligent monograph is proposed. And then again, you have to think of the authors. All right, it is going to be a slog for them, and there will be *longueurs* and lacunae of knowledge: I wonder how happy Honour was, after writing about the sophisticated pastiches and *jeux d'esprit* of chinoiserie, to be turning his attention to cave-paintings of bison? But if you are as versed in art history as Honour and Fleming are, if you have devoted your whole career to it as they have, most of the task will be a diverting skate over well-known tracts of territory—as opposed to the laborious, back-breaking sinking of shafts which is involved in researching a single artist and writing a learned monograph.

And what is the value for the reader? Well, works are brought into relation with each other; grand movements are discerned, individuals trudging together through art history like the noble phantasmagoria that trooped through De Quincey's mind during an opium session. On a more prosaic level, the book gives the student a kind of grid into which individual fragments of knowledge and appreciation can be fitted as they are acquired: a sort of leaf-mould in which new plants can sprout. For a time I taught art history to fashion students at the Walthamstow School of Art, and I remember what a mercy it was to be able to refer them to E. H. Gombrich's *The Story of Art* (first published by Phaidon in 1950)—the book which stands as the main forerunner of Honour's and Fleming's, and the book which theirs is likely to oust for good.

SIR ERNST GOMBRICH is no slouch himself; he is one of the great generalisers of our time, and books such as *Art and Illusion* (1960) and *The Sense of Order* (1979) have permanently changed

[1] *A World History of Art*. By HUGH HONOUR and JOHN FLEMING. Macmillan, £15.95 until January 31; £17.50 thereafter.

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September 1982, £17.50

Dora Wiebenson, editor
Architectural Theory & Practice from Alberti to Ledoux
distributed for Architectural Publications Inc
September 1982, £17.50

JOHN SOANE

The Making of an Architect

Pierre de la Ruffinière du Prey

Sir John Soane—the complex, even controversial creative personality who designed such buildings as the Bank of England, country houses like Tyringham, and London's Soane Museum—was one of the foremost architects of the classical revival in eighteenth-century England. At once rigorously severe and yet eccentric, his designs display ingenious hidden lighting techniques and romantic spatial devices which have echoes in twentieth century buildings

Pierre du Prey has undertaken a systematic investigation of the vast collection of memorabilia at the Soane Museum, and of other sources outside its walls, to trace Soane's rise from humble origins to his establishment of an architectural office in 1784. Du Prey details Soane's training and the influence upon him of Dance, Holland, Brown, Adam and Chambers. Soane's early triumphs and setbacks in the Royal Academy Schools dramatically unfold; the reader follows Soane's footsteps abroad with the guidebooks he relied upon; Soane's meticulous accounts and daily journal provide a complete picture of an architect's diverse activities after entering independent practice. At every step along this path to success, a wealth of his architectural drawings illustrate Soane's development and the sources of his mature style.

This work is much more than the biography of one architect's training and of the state of the profession in the latter half of the eighteenth century: richly illustrated with many previously unpublished drawings it will be of interest to present-day architects and the general reader as well as historians of art and architecture and specialists in the eighteenth century.

432 pages, 275 illustrations, 8 colour plates.
Published November 1982, £25.00

The University of Chicago Press

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the way in which many of us look at art. Yet it has to be said that beside Honour and Fleming's *World History of Art*, Gombrich's *Story of Art* now looks sadly inadequate, even naive. For a start, it suffers to some extent from the extraordinary parochialism and condescension of which so many European art historians have been guilty—including even Lord Clark, who delivered a television series shamelessly called "Great Paintings of the World", not one of which was by a Chinese, Japanese or Persian artist. Gombrich does have some truck with Eastern art, especially in the earlier ages, but there is a distinct feeling that Hokusai and Japanese prints are only dragged in because they were an influence on the Impressionists, and that what he called "Negro sculpture" (Honour and Fleming handle the first word with tongs to indicate its latent racism) is only considered because of its effect on cubism—though Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon* has about as much relation to Dogon sculpture as Meissen *chinoiseries* had to the 10th-century paintings of Li Ch'ing.

BUT HONOUR AND FLEMING are truly cosmopolitan: they devote almost 100 pages to "Art and the world religions", including sections on Buddhism and Far Eastern art, Early Christian and Byzantine art, and Early Islamic art. The African stuff comes later, in 47 pages on " 'Primitive' alternatives", and of course we are to understand that "primitive" does not really mean *primitive*. After justly mocking the colonial exhibition at Tervuren, outside Brussels, 1897—"their aim being quite clearly indicated in the entrance to the museum at Tervuren by contemporary European sculptures personifying Belgium bringing peace, prosperity and Christianity to the Congo!"—the authors add: "Although the ideas and assumptions on which these museums were based have fallen into disrepute, together with the colonialism they celebrated, the word 'primitive' is still applied to the objects exhibited in them (although nowadays 'tribal' is sometimes preferred)." They illustrate the iron and wood sculpture of the god A'a from Rurutu—and they might have added that this is the subject of a William Empson poem which includes the line "It creeps with all the creeds of the world." Another illustration is of a double-ended suspension hook from Middle Sepik, New Guinea, in carved and painted wood—and here I am surprised that the authors do not mention the piece's amazing affinity with European art nouveau, with its "whiplash" lines. (This may be a further argument against "primitive" being primitive, or—as the piece is early 20th-century—it might conceivably have been modelled on some European artefact imported into New Guinea?)

BUT IT IS NOT JUST in their superior cosmopolitanism that Honour and Fleming outdistance Gombrich. That might in any case be partly attributed to changing attitudes since 1950, and to the greater space the co-authors have at their disposal (639 pages to Gombrich's 504). I made a random test and chose Rubens, as an individual master who is also central to a great art movement, the Baroque. Gombrich gives him eight consecutive pages; Honour and Fleming only give him four. Gombrich, as his book title suggests, is telling a Story, and brings the painter vividly before us. Here is the Flemish youth arriving in Rome when he is "twenty-three years old—perhaps the most impressionable age. He must have listened to many heated discussions on art, and studied a great number of new and older works, not only in Rome, but also in Genoa and Mantua (where he stayed for some time)." And then we see him arrive in Antwerp in 1608 at 31: "He had learned everything there was to be learned; he had acquired such facility in handling brush and paint, in representing nudes and drapery, armour and jewels, animals and landscapes, that he had no rival north of the Alps." But if we ask wherein lay Rubens's mastery, this is what we get: "He was confident that his brushwork could quickly impart life to anything, and he was right. For this was the greatest secret of Rubens's art—his magic skill in making anything alive, intensely and joyfully alive." Gombrich, it seems, is telling not just a story—it is a fairy story, something out of Grimm or Perrault. It concerns a man with miraculous powers, who is better than all comers and can make the dead live—"infusing them with buoyant energy." And the baroque style, too, was something of a miraculous victory—over what Gombrich felicitously calls "the deadlock of Mannerism."

Now turn to Honour and Fleming, and see how they treat Rubens. To Gombrich, Rubens has the magical power to exalt the ordinary. Honour and Fleming's interpretation is exactly opposite to this: *Rubens makes the divine human.* "Whether he was painting a mythological or a sacred subject, Rubens concentrated on the vitality and corporeality of the figures, seeking in this way to bring the supernatural world within the grasp of human experience." In a description of Rubens's *Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus*, the authors beat Gombrich at his own game of generalisation in this throw-away aside, which could inspire a long essay in itself: "Despite the theme, the effect is curiously unerotic—rather as Rubens's religious pictures are unmystical." And, far more securely than Gombrich does, they integrate him in the baroque movement. To this end, they fasten on a part of his career which Gombrich, for all his story-telling, completely ignores—his semi-retirement, after making his fortune, to the Château de

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Steen near Antwerp, where, in his late fifties, he suddenly revealed a new aspect of his art—a concentration on large-scale landscape-painting for its own sake. Even in these Flanders landscapes, which have nothing to do with rosy Venuses with puckered skin and dimples, with gods, goddesses, classical mythology or architectural conceits, Honour and Fleming discern a baroque ambition; and the passage is a good example of their writing at its most powerful and picturesque:

> "Pride in land-ownership may have prompted these works, which he evidently painted for himself. But they seem to be still more deeply personal—celebrations, as it were, of the goodness and plenitude of creation on the part of a middle-aged man who had recently married a second wife, 27 years his junior, and was fathering a new family of children. Very vividly do they convey, in the generous all-embracing 'Baroque' rhythm of their great arcs and spirals, a sense of perpetual growth and change as the earth revolves in its diurnal course, and a sense, too, of an aging man's longing to catch and hold the fleeting moment, all of which gives them a deeply moving human dimension. Rainbows appear, storm-clouds roll away and through them sunlight, which always seems brighter after rain, strikes on patches of meadow land and glistens on wet leaves, while the workaday life of the farm goes on undisturbed—buxom milkmaids lead the cattle home to the byre, men build stacks of new-mown hay, geese paddle in the flowing stream."

Any book of art history on this scale is also implicitly a book of art criticism—merely by what it includes and excludes, and how much space it accords to what is included. Honour and Fleming might deny this. In a somewhat disingenuous preface they airily assert that they have "tried to shed assumptions about art being intended primarily for aesthetic enjoyment, often in alliance with social prestige, assumptions determined largely by the art market and art collecting and themselves, in turn, responsible for current Western conceptions of what 'art' is." These conceptions, they allege, are peculiar to the West and even there are very recent. "Until the nineteenth century few, if any, great works of art were made to be seen in museums or art galleries. Most were made in the service of religion or magic or of some secular ideal or, more rarely, to fulfil the private longings of the artist." So their book, they say "seeks to explore the different ways in which men and women have given visual expression to perennial human impulses and concerns—to the appetite for sensual gratification and the need for self-knowledge and self-mastery, to exalted dreams and demonic passions, to beliefs and convictions about the ends of life and about the human environment and the supernatural powers, to hopes and fears of the beyond."

In every human society, they add, art "forms part of a complex structure of beliefs and rituals, moral and social codes, magic or science, myth or history. It stands midway between scientific knowledge and magical or mythical thought, between what is perceived and what is believed, and also between human capabilities and human aspirations." Blah . . . blah . . .blah—the evident purpose of this uncharacteristically wordy, pompous and sanctimonious claptrap is to let our authors off the hook: let no one accuse them of actually liking what they illustrate! It is all in the interests of sociological exploration. (The first sentence of their book begins: "In writing this outline history our aims have been exploratory rather than critical." Good word, "exploratory": means no one can complain if you arrive nowhere.)

BUT RATHER LIKE Shakespeare's Prince Hal, who first tells us he is a plain blunt man of no words and then reels off some of the finest language ever written, Honour and Fleming (mercifully) have no intention of keeping to their self-denying ordinance. Explore they may and do; but they are also quite prepared to load their heroes with praises—or to express disapproval where they think fit (Adolph Menzel's historical pictures are "almost pedantic in their dependence on research.") But again, if their approach were really as bleakly sociological as the introduction would suggest, why do they not give space to the green-faced lady of Tretchikoff, a work which would certainly appear to represent the "human impulses and concerns" of a large section of the populace today? *Not* an artist who figures in the index; neither does Sir Gerald Kelly, PRA, whose *Burmese Girl* is another top favourite and might be held to pander to the "appetite for sensual gratification" mentioned in the foreword.

So who does represent modern art? Every British author of an art book will know the pressure which is brought to bear on him to include "American material"—so that his book will sell in America. (The absurd idea being that Americans are only interested in American art; which is about as idiotic as suggesting that Englishmen are only interested in English jazz.) So one can almost hear the sigh of relief when Honour and Fleming enter the broad, sunlit uplands of Pop Art. Here at last they can forget all those Frogs who dominated art between Manet and Braque, and glory in the American achievement. "Although the United States had been in the forefront of developments in Western architecture ever since the late nineteenth century and, with Frank Lloyd Wright, had played a leading role in the early twentieth

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century, it was not until after the Second World War that New York superseded Paris as the focal point of new art in the West." Beneath these words is a colour reproduction of a Jackson Pollock of spluttering, splodging, squirting paint. We are obliged (obligated, as they say over there) to acknowledge the pioneering work in Pop Art by Richard Hamilton, but soon we can talk happily of Oldenburg, Rauschenburg, Lichtenstein, Rosenquist and Warhol. And here our critical powers, which we have felt perfectly competent to exercise throughout the last 30,000 years of human history, are mysteriously suspended. Suddenly, it is thought quite enough just to quote Andy Warhol without explanation or comment: "Warhol said he liked mechanical repetition and wanted to be a machine himself. 'I think it would be terrific if everybody was alike.' He made a cult of being boring and banal and superficial—'just look at the surface of my paintings and films and me, and there I am. There's nothing behind it.'" There he is indeed, with nothing behind him, his sublime inanity not even subjected to the mild reproof dished out to Adolph Menzel.

Now Honour and Fleming might reasonably argue that, since their expressed aim is sociological, not aesthetic, it is their duty to show the aberrations to which western taste has been victim: just as a social historian would need to write about the belief in witchcraft which was prevalent in Europe for many centuries but which survives today only among a few covens of cranks. That argument would wash if they had faithfully devoted a large section to the ponderous salon pictures which were the rage among most late 19th-century connoisseurs, rather than to the Impressionists who were consigned to a *Salon des Refusés*. The fact is that, in that earlier period, they are making aesthetic judgments; in the later, they are simply accepting wholesale the received opinion which (as happened once with the 19th-century salon works) has been temporarily exalted by a vast commercial apparatus (hype by critics, investment by galleries and collectors) which it would be embarrassing to dismantle quickly. The result? No Graham Sutherland. No John Piper. No David Hockney! Just Buddy, Can You Spare a Dine?

This part of the book will one day be valuable fodder for a genuine sociologist of art—one fair day, when Oldenburg's giant hamburger will be seen as the silly practical joke it is, when Lichtenstein's pastiches of Art Deco and of comic strips will be placed on a rung slightly lower than Max Beerbohm's parodies of writers in *A Christmas Garland* and when the sacred cow of Picasso (as, to my delight, I recently heard him described by a Royal College of Art student) will have been sent to the abattoir, where the rotten carcass will be carved up as he carved up humanity in his paintings.

FOR SOME REASON, ancient Egyptian art has been largely exempt from the patronising attitude European art historians have had to foreign art. Perhaps there is a feeling of "This thing is bigger than both of us"; but Europeans have been interested in what the ancient Egyptians themselves made, not just in European fantasies of ancient Egypt. Schoolboys usually ask for the mummies first in the British Museum; and the Tutankhamun treasures attracted crowds which were not remotely rivalled by, for example, those for the Chinese "jade princess."

At the same time, there are European fantasies on the Egyptian, and now they have been catalogued and described in James Stevens Curl's *The Egyptian Revival*.[2] This is a work of remarkable, not to say obsessional, scholarship, which takes us from the roots of the revival in the ancient civilisation of the Nile Valley up to Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, the futuristic pyramids of Ledoux and Boullée so beloved by neo-classical fanciers, and right up to Art Deco cinemas, the (dismantled) Strand Palace Hotel and David Hockney's Egyptian-style designs for the 1978 production of *Die Zauberflöte* at Glyndebourne. On the way we encounter a lot of gloomy funerary architecture: Egyptian building design even incorporated coffin shapes. The dolorous style lent itself also to prisons, such as John Haviland's House of Detention and Halls of Justice ("The Tombs"), New York. Indeed, the Egyptian Revival is one subject in which a strong American representation is appropriate; and although one reviewer of this book (Anthony Quinton in *The Times*, London) has written of its "almost telephone-directory detail", it does neglect some important American revival architecture, especially in Minneapolis. Surely Grauman's Egyptian Theater in Hollywood deserves more than a bare mention (which incidentally does not find its way into the lamentable index. If ever a book deserved and needed a good index, this was it. Dr Curl may well be not to blame: all too many publishers nowadays announce to their authors, "We have allowed you ten pages for an index", rather than allot pages according to the length of the index the author submits.) It is also a pity that the book confines itself rather ruthlessly to architecture and interiors: I could wish that it also dealt with such manifestations of the revival as the "Talking Sphinx" wireless set advertised in a late 1920s issue of *Cherwell*, the Oxford undergraduate magazine.

[2] *The Egyptian Revival*. By JAMES STEVENS CURL. George Allen & Unwin, £30.

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CHRISTOPHER WRIGHT IS a young scholar who has already had a *succès de scandale* with his theories about Georges de la Tour. After the BBC had made a television film about an alleged La Tour, *The Fortune Tellers*, in yet another series on great works of art, Wright denounced it as a forgery. In the heated war of experts which followed, Sir John Pope-Hennessy assured readers of *Apollo* magazine that Dr Wright could be sure of one thing: nobody would ever again take seriously anything he said unless it was backed by the testimony of a reputable scholar. Well, here is their chance to try: a beautifully produced book on Rembrandt self-portraits.[3] One reviewer of this book has already admitted that he was moved to tears by the succession of profound images, ranging from the uncertain and questing-eyed youth to the pocked old man with a bulbous nose and eyes drowning in rheum, who brings to mind Laughton's immortal portrayal on film. I sympathise with that critic; yet I was also tempted, irreverently, to use the volume as a "flicka" book, flicking the pages over in rapid, cinematic sequence to produce a kind of 17th-century Dutch movie of the ageing of Rembrandt. But Wright's text, damning to some variants of the portraits which are dismissed as unauthentic or dubious, has at least the appearance of scholarly meticulousness, the judgments being backed in some cases by costume evidence from Diana de Marly, his collaborator in the La Tour exposé. We shall await Sir John Pope-Hennessy's comments with interest.

[3] *Rembrandt: Self-Portraits*. By CHRISTOPHER WRIGHT. Gordon Fraser, £12.95.

Faces of the Age

From Garden to Glasscrete—By STEPHEN GARDINER

ONE OF THE TROUBLES with Tom Wolfe's treatise on modern architecture is its title. *From Bauhaus to Our House*[1] is, of course, a pretty title—so pretty that Mr Wolfe can't have been able to resist it. But, like many stories that won't go right, he enters his at the wrong point. The title is the cause; here is a book that makes the dreadful mistake of regarding past and present as separate things—there is a past and there is a present, and no connection between the two. Plenty of modern architects—and, for that matter, painters and sculptors as well—have made exactly the same mistake, a reason why so much of building during the last 30 years is the worst on record.

Memories are shorter or longer, an appreciation of background history often greater or lesser according to age groups. Take mine: when I was a student at the Architectural Association in London at the end of the War, we knew what Le Corbusier had done in France in the preceding decade—we had got hold of his books—and we knew what Berthold Lubetkin had done up the road in Highgate and at the Zoo; but for us, then, the surroundings of Georgian architecture in Bedford Square were generally regarded as sentimental old hat. We really had no idea what Le Corbusier knew of the Acropolis when he built the Pavillon Suisse in Paris, or what Lubetkin felt about Haussmann's city plan when he built the Highpoint flats.

For us, experience of the past was a blur, a picture which, with the increasing distance of time, finally vanished into a dense fog. I had, perhaps, a slight doubt about the mysteries of the virginal purity of modern architecture—put into my head, possibly, by Eliot's *Four Quartets* when at school—but I cannot honestly say that this made a great difference to a belief that it had been suddenly spirited out of a totally new world of expression.

In the 1950s, of course, it was a bit more difficult for students: much of the past had been physically obliterated by bombing. The surge of post-War idealism focused attention and creative energy on reconstruction, and people were looking to the future—not to the *past*. It was only when the terrible mistakes that prompted the writing of Mr Wolfe's book started to be made that some people were stopped suddenly in their tracks and began to notice, through sheer contrast, the extraordinary quality of old buildings. What commonplace modern architecture had not got, a little terrace of artisan cottages of around the 1820s had in abundance—ordinary human feeling. Move to the 1980s and what do we find?—Classical revival, a depressing retreat to neo-suburban in urban centres, and the Art Deco of Post-Modernism; very much, in fact, where Lubetkin came in when he landed in England just over 50 years ago.

[1] *From Bauhaus to Our House*. By TOM WOLFE. Cape, £6.95.

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Mr Wolfe's book would have been a better one if it had formed the second part of a two-part story, of which the first dealt with the beginnings. Then he might have had greater control of the aesthetic disciplines and technological advances which inspired the modern architectural movement, and the ability to perceive where its path divided—one route leading to a wider range of effective answers to contemporary problems, the other becoming lost in a glasscrete wilderness. He would certainly have had greater insight into the narrow area he explores, although this might, of course, have meant not writing the book at all. However, so obsessed is he by the early modern architects' rejection of bourgeois values that he chose to ignore the pressures lying outside his area, and treat it like a sealed glass box.

FOR ME, THERE IS ONE clear starting point, and that is the Industrial Revolution. Among its advantages, it threw up technology; among its disadvantages, it led to appalling human squalor: it was the combination of these factors that led to the birth of modern architecture.

Technology produced the engineers, many of whom were also architects. Some of the best bridges were designed by architects; for instance, around the turn of the 18th century George Dance, the younger, had a far finer idea for London Bridge than any engineer. This design—it was a great pity that the design remained an idea—demonstrated how the really good architect can turn structural knowledge into a volume of space that will transcend purely structural considerations to make a masterly unity out of every aspect of a problem, however apparently contradictory they seem.

Then there was Decimus Burton, a genius who was one of the greatest single forces in pushing modern architecture out into the open. It's most surprising that no proper study of his achievements has been written—it was the centenary of his death last year. His remarkable work was in itself like a bridge, for it spanned the 19th century—one end firmly sunk in Palladian, the other reaching out to the glass and cast-iron which culminated with his final and most achieved work, the unique structure of the Temperate House at Kew Gardens. This design displayed the essentials of the architectural conception with diagrammatic simplicity—the freedom of imaginative transparency springing from the ordered disciplines of the classical plan that was strongly drawn in, as though with a thick, soft pencil, by the partly solid base. The balanced discipline of the plan allowed Burton's burst of creative energy to take over, much as a firm structure had allowed Dance's imagination to do. And that's the lesson to be learnt.

E. R. Robson, that extraordinarily good Board School architect of the 1870s, must have missed Burton's message. Building in the Queen Anne style (with a dash of Wren) those massive structures that we still see dotted around London and elsewhere, he complained that "there was no new style to start from." He was a great traveller and did much of his research in America, so one might expect him to have come across the stirrings of the great Chicago architecture of cast-iron that was flourishing a few years later in the 1880s and '90s in the hands of vigorous men like Burnham, Sullivan, and Adler, who produced those great flat-topped buildings with huge glass and cast-iron façades that led directly to the forms of Mies van der Rohe. Wolfe couples Mies—and I find this most astonishing—with Walter Gropius, calling them the White Gods. But there are, of course, examples everywhere of the 19th-century style, in railway stations, conservatories, arcades, warehouses, and sometimes accompanied by the white paint and black bitumen of canalside architecture.

YET THERE WAS, running parallel with these rapid structural advances, another side to the Industrial Revolution; the dark, grisly, polluted side—factory chimneys, smoke, bad hygiene, poor ventilation, back-to-back streets, vermin and disease. The general squalor of conditions forced out new thoughts in town and city planning—and it is this subject, as observed in Germany, Britain, the United States and France (the hottest seats of the Industrial Revolution), which is central to Anthony Sutcliffe's *Towards the Planned City*.[2] This is a most accurately researched study, and informative on every aspect of planning from Haussmann's powerfully executed scheme for Paris to Ebenezer Howard's Garden City conception, first established in Britain by his Garden City Association in 1899.

The Garden City was a reaction against the side-effects of the filth and congestion of the Industrial Revolution, its origins stemming from sources in many parts of Europe and America. Though the movement took its name from a village on Long Island built in the 1870s—the first experiment in Garden City design—it was the Utopian aspirations of radical reformers in England round the 1880s which gave most impetus to the pioneering idea. William Morris's vision of the "Ideal Society", for instance, was one of these. And, conceived in the context of the Englishness of the Arts and Crafts garden architecture, they led on to Ebenezer Howard's socialist

[2] *Towards the Planned City*. By ANTHONY SUTCLIFFE. Blackwell, £15.00, paper £6.50.

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conception of the Garden City.

His idea was simple enough: a town of not more than 30,000 people, the minority element in the middle of agricultural land that provided the food. This became part of a determined, pre-First World War effort to extract people from dense, unhygienic cities, and spread them through the fresh air and sunshine of the countryside. Similar efforts in education had been inspired by medical research which found that various diseases were caused by atrocious conditions; school design also spread out, to get proper ventilation and sunshine.

Inevitably, perhaps, Howard's ideas quickly caught on—Letchworth Garden City was started in 1903, and the message was enthusiastically picked up in America. Two were built: Frank Lloyd Wright studied the possibilities of the conception in his early Broadacre project of one man, one acre, one cow (as he called it), and Le Corbusier's Vertical Garden City of 1928 followed. Meanwhile, the English version crossed to Germany in the 1920s, and from there to Sweden. For those with a social conscience, the Garden City movement to bring sun, light, and air to people briefly became an internationally heroic aim of the century. Observed in the context of industrial squalor and as a collateral of sudden developments in engineering and building techniques, the movement could indeed be regarded as a founder member of the world of modern architecture.

I WOULDN'T EXPECT Tom Wolfe to concern himself with the dire situation of working people in the 19th century any more than I can imagine him admitting an interest in something so idealistic as the Garden City—surely, to use his kind of chatter, something so very bourgeois couldn't possibly have influenced the "Silver Prince", as he calls Le Corbusier, although I am sure that it did. But then, judging by his frivolous, gossipy story, I wouldn't expect Wolfe to know where these carefully laid and apparently idealistic (in fact, most practical) plans went wrong. For this purpose, I would recommend the new edition of *Remaking Cities* by Alison Ravetz,[3] a brilliant exposure of planning confusion.

The Howard philosophy suited the structural open frameworks of reinforced concrete employed by architects like Le Corbusier, Lubetkin, Gerrit Ritveld, Gropius and others; it was quickly absorbed within the architectural system. Yet, as a separate entity, the great dream—the vision of the ideal town—quickly ran into the ground. It took two different routes: one of them the suburb, does not come within the evolution of modern

[3] *Remaking Cities*. By ALISON RAVETZ. Croom Helm, £7.95.

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JOHN MURRAY

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architecture; the other—the New Town—does.

As with many ideas that are inherited by interpreters, contact with the original conception gets lost; people have their own ideas and want to express them, however wrong-headed they may be. Howard had two main ideas: one of these was the surroundings of agricultural land; the other, that old towns grew from the central nucleus in a sequence of rings. By the time these two ideas, recorded by Howard in a diagrammatic plan based on the circle, had become (if you like) fiftieth-hand, they had been transformed into abstractions of the original: agricultural land became a Green Belt, and the rings of historical development became concentric ring-roads. New Town planning had been established, and an English system of patterns, with radials to connect the rings, began to be exported all over the world. Derived from the same source, these patterns had one identical characteristic—the radials converged on the centre. This ploy had the neat, abstract (if mistaken) satisfaction of reference to source: the centre of the old town.

It is not difficult to observe connections with the disastrous planning decisions that so gravely damaged the social unity of post-War cities in England. Howard's vision was concerned with unity. The combination of the radial with a concentric road plan, on the other hand, led to disunity: to the separation of parts, where each part was self-contained and had a name—the neighbourhood unit. Each unit had its own roads which ended in cul-de-sacs, a deeply disturbing street experience because roads no longer led on to other neighbourhoods as they do in old towns—they were always dead-ends.

The separation of parts brought another abstraction in planning, the division of uses: education here, housing there, commercial area over there, and so on. The Howard plan cuts to the New Town which cuts to the inner city development. Add to this the concrete tower block of the system-built and factory-made prefabrication era, and you have the terrifying comprehensive development schemes which destroyed acres of towns and cities like London, Liverpool, Manchester and the rest.

THESE OPERATIONS, which led to unparalleled confusion over the 30 years following 1950, had nothing whatever to do with modern architecture, and no resemblance to the vision of Ebenezer Howard. From Iain Boyd Whyte's study of Bruno Taut,[4] however, we see that Howard's ideas did have a great impact on the German movement of the 1920s, the Activists, in which architecture was seen for the first time as a social service that was closely linked with painting and literature. As with Howard's ideal, or with Swedenborgian religion, its aim was a unification of purpose, the *Geist*—"the bond which linked mankind to the eternal." Here was the influence on Gropius, a philosophy which for the architect, artist, and industrial designer, found fulfilment in the Bauhaus.

The Activist movement (allied to the Expressionists, to the work of painters like Max Beckmann and Wassily Kandinsky, and to writers like Kurt Hiller and Kafka) sought satisfaction in the entire conception, the discovery of the elusive wholeness of things, a search which does, of course, have an ideal outlet in architecture. An exact illustration of this can be seen in Taut's city plan for *Die Stadtkrone*, where the layout is defined by a circular perimeter that looks mysteriously like a Peking wall, a form which displays odd similarities with the Howard conception: like his, the city has its centre and zones of activity. But the singular unreality, crossed with oriental mysticism, pervading Taut's vision separates the design from the down-to-earth practicalities of Howard's imagination, and indicates why the Activists were rapidly swallowed up by the Functionalists of the Bauhaus.

A take-over of idealists by realists was inevitable; Taut's contribution was certainly a fragment of a larger operation, and thus a suitable thesis for a particular brand of archaeological historian; it was an obscure, minor fragment, nevertheless.

ACTIVISTS, DADAISTS, Expressionists, Functionalists; over the last 30 years or so there has been a similar succession of sporadic movements—New Brutalists, Constructivists, Revivalists, Post-Modernists, Over-Activists; but no Functionalists. That, of course, is hardly surprising. While Tom Wolfe may say that at "the heart of functional, as everyone knew, was not *function* but the spiritual quality known as *nonbourgeoisie*", for many today, the functionalist is seen to be responsible for towns and cities piled up with the litter of tower blocks. If functionalism had anything to do with this, it was of a particularly unpleasant kind, concocted from a mixture of things—chiefly a philistinism egged on by materialism, a blind determination to get maximum accommodation for minimum financial outlay.

Whatever one may think about the architecture of the functional—"this frightful word", Le Corbusier said, "was born under other skies than those I have always loved"—or about that of Gropius, the functionalist's primary aim was to purify architectural design, as Eliot's was to purify language: to dispense with meaningless embellishments that overlaid the façade, smothering the

[4] *Bruno Taut and the Architecture of Activism*. By IAIN BOYD WHYTE. Cambridge University Press, £35.00.

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message of scale and proportion. "We wanted", Lubetkin says, "to give a face to our age." They certainly had no intention of destroying the past, as the tower-block builders did. In 1923, for instance, Le Corbusier wrote in *Towards an Architecture*:

> "Homes make the street and the street makes the town and the town is a personality which takes to itself a soul. . . ."

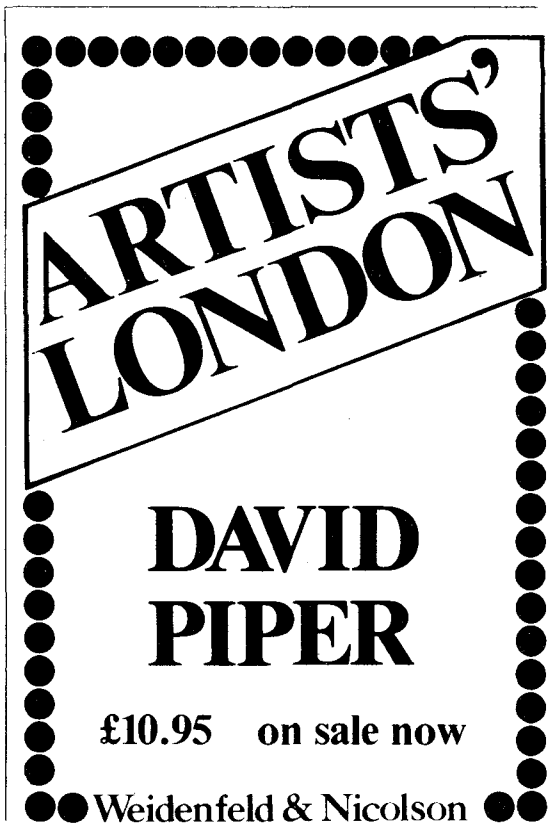
For one kind of functionalist, beauty was expressed by the boiling of architecture down to the bones (see, for example, Jørn Utzon's great Parliament building at present nearing completion in Kuwait), as it was in Athenian Greece or the Perpendicular Gothic. For the other kind of functionalist, aesthetics was "a frightful word" and simplicity was exploited for commercial ends. When viewed dispassionately, it can be seen that the inspiration of the modern architectural movement had no part in the worst disaster in the story of building.

INDEED, MODERN ARCHITECTS have made many works of beauty and good sense, as William Curtis's comprehensive study of 20th-century architecture bears witness.[5] He begins with 19th-century influences, drawing attention to the importance of William Morris's predictions about the dangers of mechanisation, the full force of which have been experienced now, a hundred years later. Yet a characteristic of all the best modern architecture is the excellence of craftsmanship that Morris upheld—it has to be, since the artist *has* to protect his product.

In the early work of masters like Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier and Lubetkin, the details are flawless—every possibility has been considered: weather, expansion and contraction of materials, exclusion of draught and the rest. Of course, buildings have to be looked after, like anything else: cars break down if they're not serviced, feet get foot-rot if never washed. Among those buildings which have been cared for, Mies van der Rohe's Seagram skyscraper in Manhattan is as good as new, as is Alvar Aalto's Town Hall of the same 1950s vintage at Sāynātsalo in Finland. Compare the condition of such works with the common tower block, bursting at the seams, wet with condensation, or already demolished.

Mr Curtis devotes a considerable amount of space to the influence of Wright and Le Corbusier, and both had a world influence. I have always felt that the whole of architecture is encapsulated in the work of this pair—for both of them, the ultimate solution lay in a struggle for balance and harmony. Wright was influenced by nature and the East, and this meant seeing a building as a shelter, stressing the elements—the parts, the roof, foundations, fireplace. Le Corbusier, on the other hand, found in primitive forms a recognition of the essentials of life, observed in the context of the classical frame—in the post-and-beam structure expressed in the Orders, and the feeling of space in and around them. Over time, the gap that separated and divided their attitudes—and their architectures—gradually closed. Wright's work became simpler and more flexible, as he was less dependent on nature for his inspiration; and Le Corbusier's became more flexible, too, as he was less restricted by classical disciplines. It is in this meeting point—which Taut, for one, wished to find—that the wholeness of architecture resides.

Peter Collymore's collection of Ralph Erskine's architecture[6] and the analysis of *Livable Streets* by Donald Appleyard[7] provide apt codas to the 20th-century story. We are back to the street again, to the importance of which Le Corbusier called attention nearly 60 years ago—the dog-eared street, those very ordinary streets we will



[5] *Modern Architecture since 1900*. By WILLIAM J. R. CURTIS. Phaidon, £25.00.

[6] *The Architecture of Ralph Erskine*. By PETER COLLYMORE. Granada Publishing, £20.00.

[7] *Livable Streets*. By DONALD APPLEYARD. University of California Press, £15.60, $34.40.

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find so much enjoyed, whether in old San Francisco or in old London. *Livable Streets* is a most important book, and for those who can't be bothered to use their eyes and do their own research—among them, many architects and planners—this will cut a long and complex story short.

With Erskine—trained in England, practising in Sweden, with work built at Cambridge, Milton Keynes, and Newcastle—we have the kind of architect who likes to make streets, who is fascinated by natural materials like wood, and by craftsmanship. At least some architects have managed to survive the commercial, rough world, and slip through the net of bad patronage. There was a time—up until the end of the 19th century, perhaps—when the direction of architecture from above was in capable hands. But the collapse of human values and the onslaught of materialism which accompanied the two World Wars have been so devastating that, certainly over the last 30 years, the reverse is now true. Architecture can be a tightrope walk between common sense and the imagination, between science and human aspirations. It must have enlightened patronage. As things stand today, particularly in England where bourgeois values are once more in full flood, I see no hope of its survival as a stable framework for society.

Vermeer & Friends

"The Delft School"—By LAWRENCE GOWING

VERMEER WAS NEVER entirely forgotten, as the books used to say. In recent memory he has not been exactly neglected; the rarity of the pictures and their value are enough to prevent that. They reveal themselves, change hands and find their resting places in a continual minor flurry of controversy and when fabrications are unmasked the controversy becomes savage. But there had been no solid addition to knowledge of Vermeer for two decades at least—in contrast to the yard-long bibliographies for the masters who were his peers in Amsterdam and Antwerp. Stranger still, no serious historian since 1923 had shown the slightest curiosity about the rest of art and life in the town that produced him. Strange because Delft was the scene of our kind of great painting—painting that was domestic in subject and scale, painting that was sensible and affectionate. It was secular, yet faithful, appreciative and informative, convivial and erotic in congenial ways, with pictures designed like well-conducted households, painterly in our way, not at all the baroque way.

There was not a great deal of Delft painting; but it was great, and no one seemed to be attending. Until just lately; but now the lists are full of substantial books about Vermeer and the painters of Delft. It is delightful when the stream of criticism turns and flows back where its refreshment is needed. The masterpieces of the Delft School—not abundant, it is true, but extraordinarily numerous in proportion to the output—look at us with a new and grateful lustre from the gallery walls.

Not that we are allowed to call it the Delft School. Christopher Brown, who has written an appropriately slender and studied book on Carel Fabritius,[1] warns repeatedly against any such usage, apparently because it is so uncertain who taught what to whom. Austerity on such matters is typical of the new writers, but the consensus of talents in the context of a certain place that fosters a local style and a common direction—which is sometimes called a "school" in the discussion of European painting—does not depend on that kind of borrowing. As the smaller centres go, we have a rather better impression in Delft than most of what the painters had in common and its relation to the place. Well-thought-of historiography does not now deal in sentiment, still less with the spirit of place. The spirit in which one still looks across houses and yards, across the canal called Oude Delft, towards the tower of the Old Church and the unobtrusive cradle of the most lasting independence and pride, is certainly intangible. The genius of Delft is hard to specify even as precisely as De Hooch and Jan Steen rendered it in the pictures they painted of the same view, with the same tower presiding, at least for a few years until they packed their bags and left to paint their duller works elsewhere.

I would guess that Delft painting is recognisable just because it owes less than most to what is borrowed from contemporaries; it is marked rather by conventions of building, their proportions and materials, by social conventions and the visible traces of urban behaviour, by the inhabitants who cherish these things, their habits and

[1] *Carel Fabritius.* By CHRISTOPHER BROWN. Phaidon, £30.00.

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their equally visible values, loyalties, amusements. All this seems to me rather delicately, reticently, to mark the very recognisable cluster of painterly formulations, the relationship of tone to exposition, the habitual colour, the *painting* in these pictures.

The Delft church painters owed nothing to Fabritius; Brown does well to point out we have no reason to think that this, to us, splendid painter, was in a position to influence anyone. We have only seven undoubted pictures by him, and no report of how many were destroyed in the explosion that killed him. Moreover, at one point before he came to Delft, he was recorded as a carpenter; it is possible that for most of his life he would have seemed to be on the edge of amateurism, like his father, the schoolmaster of Beemster, who got permission from the school board to paint in his spare time, providing that it did not interfere with the classes or affect the boys. All this admirable man's sons became painters, one great, one good, the third rather less so. Another significant fact; among the few remaining pictures by the great one, Carel Pietersz, apart from the quality—and we need to think more about what the word means in a case like this—no two are alike. Of course, we should know no more about Giorgione if he had painted the Tempestà twice. Most Dutch professionals, like most who are not Dutch, repeat themselves. The celebrity of Fabritius, such as it was, dated from after his death.

The quality of "great" painting, so far as one can tell, resides in radical differences from what has been painted before. In Fabritius the innovation in the perspective is apparent enough, but the change inherent in his adaptation of the Rembrandt pattern in his self-portraits, for example, is rarely discussed. The space round the head in the version at Rotterdam constitutes an arena of a different kind, in which head-painting can exert a personal force not quite like anything before it, which is embodied in the paint. By no means incongruously, a similar renewal is achieved in the sheer felicity of touch that embodies the tiny Goldfinch—a reproduced facsimile provides the book with the loveliest dust-jacket of the year. There is an intrinsic self-sufficiency in the paint-patches and the fabric of tones that they build up. You might think that this would be a quality of all "good" and painterly painting, but it is not. On the contrary, the descriptive habit of naturalism excludes it. One man at least was qualified to understand the magnetism that a human embodiment in paint exerts and the self-sufficiency of tones. Vermeer owned pictures by Fabritius; Brown notes testily that "much has been made of the fact", then proceeds to make less of it by misquoting the number.

This was no amateur. Fabritius and the highly capable painters of church interiors like Houckgeest and Van Vliet certainly contributed to the consensus in Delft, and Hoogstraten once at least painted in the light of it. Perspectives of the kind that Daniel Vosmaer (whom Fabritius collaborated with) sumptuously combined with a view of the town, imitating or evoking the spacious colonnade at Honselaersdjik, do not seem to be unconnected with Fabritius. When the perspective of a tiled floor leads the eye to a standing figure displacing the light like a pillar, it is reasonable to think of Vermeer working in that consensus too.

THE ODDEST OF the Delft painters, Leonard Bramer, was a friend of the Vermeer family and a witness at his wedding; he was a decorative painter with a repertoire of skills and motifs learnt in Italy, at first sight unconnected with Vermeer's eventual style. Foreign though his art was to the cool objectivity which in the 1650s came to dominate painting in the town, even he contributed to the Delft consensus. He was the evident inventor of the half-emblematic still-life foregrounds, littered with viols and household vessels and jewelled with light, which Vermeer adopted bereft of their foreboding overtones in his mature work. He brought a Venetian type of mural design, with musical parties arranged on terraces, leaning over draped parapets, to add a more stately grandeur

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to proceedings in the Prinsenhof, but incautiously undertook to keep his frescoes in repair as part of the service, landing himself with a lifetime of restoration. He was an eccentric and likeable figure, with anachronistic exotic charms and a tenebrous, splintered touch like anticipations of Magnasco; but his sophistication was a distinct addition to the Delft repertory. The bas-relief-like group of St Peter's denial in his Rijksmuseum picture of 1642, nearly twenty years before Rembrandt, shows him experimenting with reduced contrasts in the chiaroscuro of spatial recession, in the manner of Ter Brugghen and the Catholic painters of Utrecht, so that at least one Delft painter was engaged with style for its own sake—the very style that Vermeer was to collect or deal in and no doubt to admire, the style from which he was surely to learn something of that mirage of naturalness which was to form his own deceptive magic.

Some tantalising things we shall never know. What can Fabritius's mural decorations have looked like? How can we imagine a painter so wedded to a painterly perfection under the influence of the ramshackle Bramer? As the affinities which link the Delft painters multiply, I find that the severity of this excellent book on the subject of a Delft school leaves me ribaldly mutinous. But Brown is indispensable. He writes of De Hooch's series of genre scenes in the 1650s as "breathtaking." This may not be the most reasoned assessment one could imagine, but it is the first piece of wholehearted appreciation that De Hooch has had from an academic pen, probably for more than half a century. It marks an epoch in Delft studies, and the catalogue raisonné is provided, in overwhelming detail, by Peter C. Sutton whose *Pieter de Hooch: Complete Edition*[2] is very nearly the book that was needed. The heart of it, for my money, is in the first forty-eight entries, ending with the lovely picture of a boy bringing bread to the door (in the Wallace Collection) and the departure in about 1661 for Amsterdam and grander subjects, marble floors, brisker business, more capable head-painting, and a shift in the centre of gravity of his art.

THE EMOTIONAL TENOR of De Hooch's art was as relaxed as Vermeer's was tense. He was the Haydn to Vermeer's Mozart. Or perhaps rather a Masolino to the Delft wonderboy. Or a Pissarro to the proud, unbending temperament of the town. De Hooch was great none the less, greater than Masolino and Pissarro, because he realised the potential of the Delft subject, the household theme, which is the most entirely human subject that there is. Indeed, he himself did more to isolate that subject even than the magnetic Dordrecht pupil of Rembrandt, Nicolaes Maes, who must have been in and out of Delft in the fifties. In the wake of Maes, De Hooch was soon plunging about with heavier modelling and richer colour than was really to his purpose. Maes could give the women, especially the working women, who were his subject, qualities of the winsome or fey, which De Hooch in his good time was too naive to contrive.

The Delft subject was a lasting enrichment because De Hooch and Vermeer, with his help, were interested in the real business of household life. If you empty kitchen waste into the waste barrel or carry the washing up the yard, if you have an occasional mild problem with a slightly obstreperous drinker's glass, Delft painting is the painting for you, and Mr Sutton's is the book.

THE NEW EPOCH in Delft studies—sensible, disciplined and acute—was inaugurated seven years ago by the Dutch edition of the book by Albert Blankert that has now appeared in a useful English version as *Vermeer of Delft*.[3] Good sense and a close adherence to the documents have a disadvantage in that they do not in themselves entirely equip a writer to describe what differentiates a Vermeer from all the other painters whom criticism is accustomed to deal with in the same way. But I owe a debt to Albert Blankert, because his robust sense led me to think again about two pictures at Washington, where the curator, Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., has lately written a monograph on *Vermeer*[4] in the familiar Abrams format, which incorporates both better colour plates and more comparative material (from the emblem books in particular), with a capable commentary, than is to be had anywhere else. The two little Washington pictures, called "A Girl with a Red Hat" and "A Young Girl with a Flute", are distinguished from Vermeer's undoubted works by several obvious technical differences, and I have always been worried by the fact that the approach to the sitters, a touchstone of Vermeer's individuality, was so uncharacteristically direct.

No matter, the "Red Hat" was found to conform to a description of a Vermeer in a sale of 1822, and it showed an undoubted familiarity with the optical terms in which Vermeer renders his subject in his later works. My view was and still is that it was quite impossible that this style should have been fabricated in the first quarter of the 19th century, before photography or the painting

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[2] *Pieter de Hooch: Complete Edition*. By PETER C. SUTTON. Phaidon, £48.00.

[3] *Vermeer of Delft*. By ALBERT BLANKERT. Phaidon, £10.95.

[4] *Vermeer*. By ARTHUR K. WHEELOCK, JR. Thames & Hudson, £16.00.

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influenced by it. Writing about them thirty years ago, I remember trying to say as little about them as possible, and visits to Washington made me no happier. Now I curse my indecision; so far from having been described in 1822 it appears to me both possible and likely that the "Red Hat" was painted, perhaps around 1900, to conform to the 1822 description. Nothing so like the vision, the touch and the wit of the early twentieth century, is in the least likely to have originated at any other time. The impersonation of Vermeer is none the less astute. One of those talented people, of whom one never learns to beware, seems to have found a lot credited to Vermeer in an old catalogue, without any plausible surviving work to correspond, and undertaken to provide one.

The London that Never Was

Lost Towers, Theatres & Temples—By JAN MORRIS

"TELL ME THEN", that magnificent old architectural reactionary Sir Clough Williams-Ellis challenged me years ago, "tell me of one modern building in London that excites you!" I had to grope. The *Economist* office in St James's? The P. & O. building in the City? The Royal College of Art? But did they actually *excite* me, with their beauty, their daring or their soaring power?

No. I could think of no new London structure then, and can think of none now, possessing the quality of thrill. Not only is the architecture generally a bore, to anyone but its own practitioners and their more susceptible critics, but the craftsmanship is all too often shoddy, and the social and aesthetic planning appears to be about equally myopic and opportunist. No great city of my acquaintance has so degraded itself as has London in the years since the Second World War: yet it remains the most endlessly fascinating of them all, and no experience of travel, either, is so bitter with regret as a visit these days to the city of Wren, Nash, and Colonel Seifert.

All the more piquant to see what *might* have happened to the place, through the aborted plans, expositions and frequently hypnotic elevations of those who have, down the centuries, unsuccessfully sought to give London nobler or livelier aspects. *London As It Might Have Been*, by Felix Barker and Ralph Hyde,[1] is a spellbinding collection of such architectural non-starters: and if it contains a good deal of nonsensical folly, it contains too innovative schemes of such splendour and vivacity, often far ahead of their times, that even dear old Clough would have been agreeably startled.

Architecturally the trouble with London, for one of my tastes, is lack of bravado. Doubtless partly because of democracy's intricate channels and safeguards, so much seems half-cock. Skyscrapers are only high-rise blocks, and are scattered measly and messy across the skyline. Pedestrian precincts are only half-pedestrianised. The City of London is meanly Philistine, Piccadilly Circus is pokily squalid, the Embankment peters lamely out, and even Westminster Abbey lacks a necessary tower. When something properly grand is attempted or accomplished, sooner or later it is almost certainly frustrated, like Wren's City or Nash's Regent Street, and only a handful of public buildings in the whole of the inner city bear the stamp of proud command that one expects of a world capital.

Messrs Hyde and Barker seem to feel that on the whole the chimeras they record would not have improved the place, and they cite as their own favourite in the collection a harmless suburbanism—a Bath-like crescent that was to have formed part of a fashionable new spa at Norwood in the 1830s. It is my feeling, on the other hand, that *most* of the schemes they present would have added something, if not to the monumentality, at least to the fizz of London. Nobody wants this capital to be Haussmannised or L'Enfantined, but muddling through is a better recipe for economic survival than for civic design; and some of these projects fulfilled might have helped to dispel the feeling that London's architectural confusion is not really Tradition, Heritage, or National Character, as is so often claimed, but just self-interest or incompetence.

WE NEED NOT trouble ourselves, but for a passing chuckle, with the more preposterous proposals. Half of them were evidently no more than caprices, or even hoaxes—the vast pyramidical cemetery rising above Primrose Hill, the railway viaduct running down the middle of the Thames,

[1] *London As It Might Have Been*. By FELIX BARKER and RALPH HYDE. John Murray, £12.50.

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the Roman Colosseum in Trafalgar Square, the medievally arched and fortified Design for a West End Club House which, joke though it clearly was, nevertheless won the Royal Institute of British Architecture's Soane Medallion in 1882! Their drawings were often beautiful, their visions delightfully imaginative, but probably nobody seriously thought they would be executed.

The boldest of them, nevertheless, do powerfully suggest one particular might-have-been of the London scene: a just architectural announcement of British technical supremacy in the Victorian century. The Crystal Palace was such a monument of course, but was characteristically banished to Sydenham (instead of being, as Mr C. Burton suggested in the 1860s, turned on end to form a thousand-foot tower on the edge of Hyde Park). The great railway termini do something to fill the need, and so does Tower Bridge.

THIS BOOK, THOUGH, is full of more spectacular proposals, rich in the requisite majestic effrontery, which would have proclaimed to every visitor what kind of a nation Britain was in the years of its inventive and industrial climax.

John Pym, for example, in 1854, wanted to build a Metropolitan Super-Way, connecting all the most important parts of the metropolis, to consist of an elevated tubular thoroughfare through which trains would be hauled by cable or magnetism, with lifts to ground level at every station. Then Joseph Paxton, in the 1860s, envisaged a glass-covered and climate-controlled Great Victorian Way ringing the whole of central London and containing eight railway lines, roads, shops, houses and an indoor Rotten Row. And in more purely architectural idioms Alfred Waterhouse in 1866 offered a superbly arrogant design for the new Law Courts, including a dozen tall towers as boldly clumped as any Rockefeller Center, while in 1904 J. P. Seddon and E. B. Lamb designed a colossal Imperial Monumental Tower, rising in Gothic superbia 550 feet above Westminster, which really would have emblemised once and for all the aspirations and abilities of Victorian England.

All were thwarted, by financial stringency, public timidity, bureaucratic argument, or less disturbing alternatives; and the Titan City was built not in London, but in New York. Nor have many of the visionary planning schemes for the capital, themselves representing another vital aspect of the British genius, got much further than the drawing-board: almost all were aborted, from Wren's City grid-plan to the ideal solutions foreseen by the planners during World War II, when men like Lutyens and Abercrombie touchingly supposed the Blitz would allow them to build a city fit for heroes.

Some of these schemes make perfect sense even now—well, *almost* perfect. Colonel F. W. Trench's two-mile triumphal way from St Paul's to Hyde Park (1825) might indeed be difficult to achieve, but would certainly give London the most splendid of all ceremonial ways. Rigby Wason's sweeping thoroughfare from Westminster Abbey to Hyde Park Corner (1832) would have spared us the squalid vistas and tangled traffic jams of Queen Victoria Street. A 1910 version of Piccadilly Circus, by James Murray, nobly imagined a Shakespeare Theatre and a National Opera House in the heart of the West End, and the various Wartime plans for the rebuilding of the City, while they might have missed the spirit of cut-throat monetarism so successfully evoked by the square mile today, might just have persuaded us that even financiers share some glimmering of social conscience.

More topical nowadays, though (road schemes being out of fashion) are the successive plans for the public exploitation of London's river. Actually this is one feature of the metropolis, to my mind, which London has generally done well by. The Thames feels far more naturally a part of the capital's life than does the Seine in Paris or the Tiber in Rome, let alone the Hudson in New York. London's waterfront buildings have not always been beautiful—consider the Tower itself!—but at least the river has always been embraced as an organic part of the city scene, from the Canaletto times of the city barges to GLC days of water-bus and hydrofoil.

YET EVEN THE RIVER has missed some marvellous chances in its time. Again and again dazzling esplanades have been suggested for it, exuberant pleasure-gardens at the water's edge, magnificent waterside structures like the Natural History Museum proposed for the Embankment in 1866, or the immense opera house actually started, in 1875, on the site of Scotland Yard, but thwarted for lack of £10,000. The Embankment, today so half-hearted, was seen lined with superb palaces, overlooked by triple-decker promenades, intersected by graceful bridges, arched over by an elevated railway or (in a 1956 proposal) stretching all the way from Blackfriars to Putney. In 1861 H. R. Newton even suggested creating an immensely long causeway, jammed with great buildings, to run along the Thames in midstream from Westminster to the City.

Wonderful prospects! But most tantalising of all have been the proposals, down the generations, for bridges. Nobody builds really interesting city bridges any more, bridges like Old London Bridge, or the Ponte Vecchio, or the Rialto bridge, or even Adam's exquisite little Pulteney Bridge at

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Bath, but it is evidently not for lack of imagining them. This book is full of glorious bridge designs, all blocked, shelved or discredited: bridges with domed pavilions on them, and Doric colonnades, and shops—a double London Bridge with drawbridges in the middle and vast piazzas at each end, a rebuilt Tower Bridge all encased in glass, a bridge with a pinnacled County Hall in the middle of it. Nothing can do more for a city's image than a bridge, and any one of these marvels would have instantly entered the sight-seeing repertoire of the world, besides giving London a welcome infusion of surprise and effervescence.

Still, especially along London's river banks, all is not lost. On the contrary, we are told that the development of the disused dock areas offers the biggest architectural opportunity London has had since the Great Fire—eight square miles to be rebuilt from scratch, made or marred for generations to come. Several of the world's best architects are alleged to be working in London now. For myself, I would rather entrust the docklands to some of the bold and merry imaginers whose wasted dreams are pictured so seductively in this book. But you never know: perhaps some undiscovered genius waits, and one of these days there will arise beside that ever-patient stream buildings to make our hearts sing yet.

Artists of Auschwitz

Memorials to Misery—By TERENCE PRITTIE

IN ITS WAY, this is the most remarkable book to come out of the Second World War and the Nazi era.[1] It is the story, told in pictures, of creative courage under the most horrible circumstances imaginable—in Hitler's concentration-camps and other prisons, and in the "ghettos" of Eastern Europe after they had fallen under unpitying control of the Nazis. The 350 or so paintings, drawings, and rough sketches which have been reproduced in this book have survived miraculously, often hidden in attics, cellars, underground or even in rubbish-bins, sometimes smuggled out of places of captivity all over Nazi-occupied Europe, sometimes (with almost unbelievable audacity) sent through the post to friends outside.

These 350 "works of art"—the inverted commas are justified only because many of them do not aspire to artistic merits at all—are a selection from around 30,000 which have mainly been collected in three places. These are the *Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine* in Paris, the *Yad Vashem* Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem; and the Israeli kibbutz of Lochamei Ha-Ghettaot, in its museum of the ghetto-fighters. There are others in the museums of the former concentration camps of Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, Ravensbrück, Mauthausen and Dachau. Others, again, have remained in private hands, generally of the families of the few, the very few, of Hitler's Jewish victims who survived terrible torture and near-starvation.

Although there are some excellent introductory essays, this is a book to be studied rather than read. Its pictures have been arranged on the best basis that could be found. Thus the first section is entitled "The First Response", showing some of the art produced between 1933 and 1939. Then come the ghettos, then the transit camps—seldom written about but with their own brand of bestiality (they were ill-organised and there were no rules, so bullies and sadists had free rein). After that, a section on the prisons and prisoner-of-war camps; another on the "illegals" in hiding and as partisans; and then the book's centre-piece, the Concentration Camps themselves, culminating in the "death marches", and a few of the pictures produced from memory.

All of this work is Jewish. Maybe the sheer amount produced—for if 30,000 works survived, many more must have been destroyed—was indicative of a certain creative genius. Certainly it recorded Jewish resilience and courage under appalling conditions. The cynical might say that the Jews are used to misery; but the Hitler years brought new and dreadful dimensions of suffering. The production of artistic works was, moreover, forbidden. Its discovery could lead to every kind of brutal punishment: ceremonial whipping on the *Bock* or wooden horse until the victim's buttocks hung in bloody shreds; stringing-up by wrists or ankles; less organised but dreadful beatings-up; even execution. That is why so many of these pictures were not signed; and why the names of so many artists have survived, passed on by word of mouth, but not a single work which can be credited to them.

[1] *Art of the Holocaust*. By JANET BLATTER and SYBIL MITTON. Orbis Publishing, £12.50; Pan paperback £7.50.

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HERE, A NOTE OF personal experience. As a prisoner-of-war in Nazi Germany from July 1940 to March 1945, I did not have the ability to set down my experiences in pictorial form. The prisoner-of-war had ample opportunity to do so. If he were an officer there was actual German encouragement—to keep him out of mischief (since under the Geneva Convention he could not be put to work). By the end of 1940 materials were arriving from home, not in profusion perhaps but in sufficient quantities for those who made use of them. By contrast, the materials used by one group at Auschwitz consisted of "driftwood, low-grade clay, the canvas walls of tents (for murals), and squares of wood polished with sand. . . ." Stubs of pencils and home-made charcoal were valuable objects indeed. So were scraps of paper.

My own inability to draw at least left me free to write, and during the last nine months of imprisonment I was able to produce the first drafts of two books (published a couple of years later). Until those last months I had been fully employed planning and carrying out escapes.

But what a vast difference between the conditions under which prisoners-of-war like myself and the inmates of concentration camps worked! I had plenty of paper; they made their sketches on bits of wrappings recovered from the rubbish-bin, on the backs of empty cigarette packages, on the blank margins of a newspaper. I sat down to work on a strong, if far from soft chair in the library of Spangenberg Castle (near Kassel), in a degree of comfort. *They* sketched in corners of filthy, flea-infested, overcrowded barrack-rooms, doubtless generally perched on their own bunks, if only in order to be able to stuff their "illicit" work into a mattress to avoid discovery. I wrote with reasonable speed and ease, for there was usually just enough to eat, and so one had just enough energy. *They* were on the verge of starvation; many of the pictures that survive show it in grisly detail. Prisoners-of-war who, like myself, were officers, were largely left alone by their captors. The Jews of the concentration camps were subjected to indignity and brutality as part of their daily routine.

But starvation may have been the worst of their sufferings, once they had been rent from wives and children. Having experienced real hunger, if only for short periods, I can safely say that it is, literally, soul-destroying. How, then, did the Jews of the concentration camps find the physical energy, let alone the inner courage, to set down what is described in one of the introductory essays in this book as "the terrible truth—without glib catchwords, without seductive phrases—of what it has meant to live in the 20th century"? One of the survivors explained:

> "I wish to prove that I exist. . . . I try to banish my solitude."

So Mendel Mann wrote poetry. Another survivor, Zoran Music, felt that

> "For an artist it is impossible not to work—it's like breathing. Art gave me the force to survive."

Yes, these are "explanations"; but one is still amazed. For hunger is enervating, debilitating, demeaning. Simply to endure it is one matter; to rise superior to it, to *prove* one's superiority, is superb.

TO SELECT from these deeply moving pictures may be invidious. But some have to be mentioned. There is the grey horror of Zoran Music's crumpled corpses in Dachau; the face of the dying Jerzy Gromkowki at Mauthausen; and Bruno Furch's "Christmas Eve" at Flossenburg, with three gigantic dangling corpses dwarfing the figures of two of their *SS* tormentors below. There is Leo Haas's "Latrine" and its total indignity—the squatting figures sitting on the pole stretched over the stinking cesspit. There are two touching pictures of children: Charlotte Buresova's "Child Prisoner" and Leo Haas's "Portrait of Tommy Fritta." Much of the drawing is technically crude, but there is hardly a picture which fails to put its message across. Even *kitsch* has a meaning when the subject is human suffering: Boris Taslitzky's death scene in Buchenwald is posed and stylised but full of little details of creeping misery.

Sometimes an artist catches a glimpse of peace—Otto Karas-Kaufman's "Faraway Landscapes", painted in the so called "model" concentration camp of the ghetto of Theresienstadt. Artists could work here with far greater ease than elsewhere; they were even encouraged to exhibit their work, and some of it was sold or donated to their captors. But a picture like Otto Ungar's "Polish Children" mirrors the lurking dread of all the people in the place. The children are prematurely old, their faces pinched, haggard, apprehensive. Small wonder; they would move on, all too soon, to the death-camps.

The gruesome record of those camps is mentioned in this book, in passing. In Belzec 600,000 were murdered; in Sobibor a mere 250,000; in Treblinka nearly 800,000. Auschwitz outdid them all, with more than two million victims. I suppose I first read these figures a couple of years after War ended. Adding them together with those of all the other individual and mass murders perpetrated by the Nazis, historians of the Holocaust arrived at a total of nearly six million European Jews who were deliberately exterminated. They were not "normal" victims of war, but of systematised evil. Yet figures so astounding are impossible to grasp, and have little palpable meaning. It was not until

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I visited a refugee camp outside Munich in 1949, and talked to its haunted, solitary survivors—almost every one of them had lost all family, all friends—that even the slightest comprehension of the dimensions of their suffering began to take shape.

In one war-time diary of a Jewish prisoner:

"One of us will teach the children how to sing again, to write on paper with a pencil, to do sums and multiply. One of us is sure to survive."

This book of pictures is a memorial to the desire and will to survive, if not in the flesh then in the recorded line of tortured limb, the bowed head, the spectral eye, the fist lifted in defiance of the noose, the whip, the barbed wire. Zoran Music was able even to thumb his nose at the Nazis; he hid his drawings in a hollowed-out copy of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. It was a safe place; the book may have been a best-seller, but hardly anybody ever opened it to read.

Public Monuments & Private Parts

Victorian Sculptors—By GEORGE MACBETH

THE IDEAL VIEW of sculpture, as held by Baudelaire (and quoted on page 45 of Benedict Read's thorough survey of *Victorian Sculpture*[1]), offers an exalted, but surely rather inaccurate, picture of how most of mankind confronts a public monument:

> "Were you the most indifferent of men, the most unhappy or the most vile, beggar or banker, this phantom of stone seizes you for several minutes and orders you, in the name of the past, to think about those things that are not of this earth.
>
> Such is the divine role of sculpture."

The arresting injunction may be there, noble and uplifting, but the answer is all too often the more terrestrial one epitomised by the unknown responder who inscribed, in clear whitewash, under John Cassidy's betrousered and bewhiskered statue of James Dorrian in Bolton's Victoria Park, a message instantly recognisable even in small-scale photographic reproduction: "I love Sex."

This emphatic declaration seems to me to express the normal man's response to sculpture much more concisely, and truly, than Baudelaire's toney assertion, though not perhaps exactly in the way the graffito-artist intended. How many small boys must first have encountered sculpture (I did myself) as the alluring smoothness of a marble bust clandestinely fondled in some provincial museum? These powerful, if degraded, impulses are of long standing. One has to assume that not every broken penis was wrenched from its Athenian herm by the uncomprehending hand of Father Time. There must, at least occasionally, have been some monkish intervention, a priory finger revolted or engrossed by the simulation of genitalia.

Indeed, the urge to *touch* a statue—to "possess", perhaps, the forbidden object at some level beyond sensuous admiration of contour and yet still below full response to the solid illusion of reality—this has been one of the central appetites that sculpture has traditionally sought to satisfy. The *daimyo* of the Tokugawa shogunate who strokes the laid-back ears of the hare forming his netsuke stands at one end of a spectrum of tactile involvement. Further on, in time and daring, one might select the disciple of art deco with his hand slithering over the clinging ivory draperies of a Chiparus dancer, or even the pop-art fetishist of the 1970s who buys, and perhaps uses, an Allen Jones coffee-table supported by a kneeling odalisque proffering fibreglass buttocks.

The attempt over the centuries to repress, and then later to release, this appetite for a closer relationship with the totem has led from plinths, which lift the aggressive or delightful image out of reach, to fig-leaves, which shroud its fascinating essence in mystery. Unfortunately, the permissive revolution which has established museums where children may play with carefully prepared machinery has failed to find a formula for the acceptable adult caressing of valuable stone or metal work.

Democracy, I suspect, is irreconcilable with the proper appreciation of sculpture. Those bare masterpieces in the dusty galleries do tend to grow (if bronze and female) a little shinier about the nipple, and (if male and marble) a little blacker

[1] *Victorian Sculpture*. By BENEDICT READ. Yale University Press, $60.00, £30.00.

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with grime around the groin. Such greedily individual usage can hardly be tolerated. The general investment must be protected in the interest of all. So perhaps, at the end of the day, the secret handling of the daring schoolboy is here to stay, even if the young swot who wants to play the *daimyo* with one of Barry Flanagan's hares will have to risk a cross word, or a thick ear, from Securicor.

IT CERTAINLY SEEMS, as one reads through the two books under review, that the age of canny Puritanism, like the age of innocence, is still with us. Elfrida Manning, in her touching and cheerful memoir of her sculptor father, Sir Hamo Thornycroft,[2] can be naive enough to state, about his lovely whirling statuette, *The Joy of Life*,

> "his dancing model proved very satisfactory, dancing to him first in the nude and then in a light frilly dress. He found it very tiring work, as did she, working from moving drapery, but also enjoyable."

Surely we need more awareness of sexual attraction, or at least of the force of cloistered emotions, than this dismissive treatment allows.

Mrs Manning seems, too, almost excessively unspeculative in remarking, without comment, that five years after spending the evening with Hamo's young wife, while Hamo was abroad in France, Thomas Hardy still remembered her as "the most beautiful woman in England, or rather her whom I think the most beautiful woman in England, her on whom I thought when I wrote 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles'." What kind of night out, one speculates, did Hardy actually have with Mrs Manning's mother? Is it simply lewdness—or an apt literary curiosity—to wonder?

MRS MANNING, THOUGH, is vivid in her descriptions of an artist's everyday concerns from the 1870s until after the First World War, and her memoir does provide a breath of life for what, in Benedict Read's authoritative but self-denying work, might otherwise appear a rather money-grubbing and oppressive affair. The world of Herbert Read (the world of Naum Gabo and Barbara Hepworth and the young Henry Moore) was no doubt one in which the refined air of unadulterated Art (with a capital A) was frequently inhaled. I sympathise with Sir Herbert's son in what seems a natural enough difficulty in coming to terms with the more grossly mercantile elements in 19th-century sculpture. There is, indeed, something hard to take about all those great men in trousers who had to be so expensively commemorated in the industrial smoke.

It isn't, however, so much Mr Read's failure to be entirely fair (so it seems to me) to such a heavy-handed and yet honourably innovative celebrator of the commercial as Richard Westmacott in the Royal Exchange pediment that I object to. The puzzle about how any patron could mix up his art with his common sense (requiring a monument either to be a good likeness, or of a size to fit a niche) is one which many a foster-child of abstract Art has found it hard to solve. The milk of Roger Fry is slow, as it were, to sour.

No, the trouble is that Mr Read has his eye too firmly on a demanding circle of art historians. He makes no concessions—in style, in opinion, or in structure—to the approach popular. Some attempt has evidently been made to ameliorate the effects of this (no doubt in the editorial department of the Yale University Press) by allowing a considerable flamboyance, and even eccentricity, in the selection and arrangement of the pictures. No one who skims through these immaculately laid-out pages—generous in margin, lavish in illustration—could fail to be impressed with an atmosphere of cautious and dedicated scholarship, but one ventilated by some arty window-dressing.

Unfortunately, though copious, the illustrations are only rarely, as in the excellent close-up on the belly of Sir Alfred Gilbert's *Icarus* on p. 290, as sharply delineated, or as tightly related to the argument, as they might be. Too often they obscure detail, as in the back jacket image of Woolner's *Housemaid*, where what is being wrung out seems to be the girl's dress and not her dish-cloth. Sometimes, indeed, they contain a point ineffectively brought out by the text, as in the tiny reproduction of the plaster model for Hamo Thornycroft's *Artemis* where what is most memorable is the (uncommented on) iron-bar arrangement that pins the group in a corner of Macclesfield Town Hall.

MR READ IS QUICK to notice relocations of public statuary—notably in India, in the light of changing political affiliations—and these are well underlined in the illustrations, particularly when we see the remains of Dublin's (and Foley's) Earl of Carlisle and Viscount Gough on their sides in a yard. So why such coyness about indicating the (at times almost surreal) Victorian pussy-footing with sex and nudity? It isn't just a matter of underevaluating the fairly overt prurience of such a lubricious Hellenistic pasticheur as Robert William Sievier, with his demure Musidora pulling up her stocking like a coquette in a French whorehouse. Discussion of Victorian prudery should

[2] *Marble and Bronze: The Art and Life of Hamo Thornycroft*. By ELFRIDA MANNING. Trefoil Books, £14.95.

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properly open, and not conclude, as it does in *Victorian Sculpture*, with Palgrave's very ambiguous dismissal:

> "I confess it is difficult to think of Nollekens' Venus, Canova's Venus, Gibson's Venus, everybody's Venus with due decorum—one fancies one healthy modern laugh would clear the air of these idle images."

For most of us, the response to such an admired work as Bertram Mackennal's *"She Sitteth on a Seat in the High Places of the Mighty"*, which portrays a naked girl with a lily in her hand, her foot on a writhing man, and her buttocks squarely placed on what can only be interpreted as an art-nouveau bidet, would surely be less of a "healthy modern laugh" than a lascivious Freudian chuckle. This was not, if one is fair to the Victorians themselves, a matter of which exhibition organisers were unaware. In 1894, Mackennal's statue of *Circe* had been revealed at the Royal Academy with the base "concealed from the public gaze, lest the group of fallen men and women who compose it might be misunderstood by the ordinary crowd."

At the same time, practitioners of the other arts were prone to see the sculptor as very much a man of the flesh. Edgar Bundy's humorous painting *The Saucy Arethusa* depicts a jaunty manikin chiselling away at a cloaked enchantress of gigantic proportions while a gawping patron stares up in awe and envy. A more severe but still faintly salacious treatment is seen in J. M'Lure Hamilton's portrait of Onslow Ford, whom we see as a bearded Svengali leaning forward to perfect the waist of a crouching Venus in clay. Why, unless the sculptor was most naturally to be seen as a devotee of the Muse unclothed, was the opportunity lost to observe Ford at work on his famous monument to the hero Gordon, in full uniform, and mounted on his camel?

THAT "HEALTHY MODERN LAUGH" of Palgrave's begs too many questions. It seems to hint at an audience of impotents and inverts, the whipped Swinburne, the gondolier-loving John Addington Symonds, the sexually ignorant Ruskin. I don't suppose that the normal red-blooded magnate—like Joseph Neald, who populated the Main Hall of his Grittleton House with the nudes of Raffaele Monti—would have walked past his collection in fits of wholesome giggling. The corrupt schoolboy hand will also sometimes have been at its naughty work. One has to remember the smoking-room, and the willingness to tolerate a widespread prostitution. Victorian morals were a matter of what was appropriate where. But the involving tactile art of sculpture was undoubtedly celebrated behind closed gates with a sly, traditional love, even while those awful dignitaries were going up outdoors in their moulded trousers.

To his credit, Mr Read does allow us the story which perhaps most sums up the repressed and yet forceful sensuality of the Victorian sculptor, the emblem as well as the supplier of his damped-down clientele. I mean the account of how the sculptor John Foley

> "contracted the pleurisy that eventually killed him while working on the Asia group for the London Albert Memorial: this had entailed his sitting for hours at a time on the wet clay of the limbs of the main female figure while modelling her bust."

Anyone who has stood in the long shadow of Gilbert Scott's cupola and admired that prodigious bosom above the squatting elephant will only be able to murmur: "What a way to go!"

Parrot

Psittacus preening himself on his high perch
is a fine fellow for feathers or for declensio verbi;
for quis est puer pulcher vel pulchrior search
hic et ubique, none has his quality.

Quaestiones antwortet er avec noch mehr Fragen,
eloquent arc-en-ciel in his silver cage;
Sapientia habet toujours etwas zu sagen
for the betterment of mankind in any language.

Imitatio hominis, then, with your leather tongue
and your caput cocked sideways avec nonchalance,
give us the true knowledge that is never sung,
the real wisdom, that is without significance.

John Gohorry

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DOCUMENTS

The Strange Case of Roosevelt's "Secret Agent"

Frauds, Fools, & Fantasies—By HARVEY KLEHR

JOSEPHINE TRUSLOW ADAMS, an obscure woman bearing a distinguished name, appeared before an executive session of the United States Senate Internal Security Committee on 16 January 1957. One month later an excerpt from her testimony was published in which she explained that she had served as a liaison between Franklin Roosevelt and Communist Party leader Earl Browder during World War II, meeting the President personally nearly 40 times at both Hyde Park and the White House. Aside from communicating Browder's views on a variety of issues, Adams also brought Roosevelt documents received from the Chinese Communists, requests for favours (on such personal matters as the pending deportation of Mrs Browder), and useful political gossip. According to her testimony, Miss Adams established so solid a relationship with Roosevelt that he jokingly called her "Dr Johnson", after the famous conversationalist.[1]

Her story had the imprimatur of the only one of the principals still alive. Robert Morris, the Senate Committee's counsel, announced that while Earl Browder did not want to testify, he had confirmed her account. Right-Wing anti-New Dealers have used the tale over the years to insinuate that Roosevelt harboured either sympathy for or naivety towards Communists. Even such sympathetic historians as Joseph Lash have admitted that Adams had used the First Lady as a "mailman" for letters between Warl Browder and the President, and discreetly made no mention of her charges before the Senate Committee.[2]

There was something odd, however, about the whole episode. When stories of her activities briefly surfaced in 1953, Adams denied acting as a liaison and noted that she had only been at the White House once in 1939 as part of a group presenting a petition. Even more suprisingly, little was heard of her after the 1957 revelations were made public. David McKay Publishers advertised her book, *I Was Roosevelt's Secret Emissary*, for the Fall 1957 list, but never brought it out. From Josephine Truslow Adams herself there was no further word or news. She vanished.

THE JOSEPHINE ADAMS STORY is both a personal tragedy and an instructive lesson. It demonstrates very little about Franklin Roosevelt, but more about Earl Browder and the Communist Party, and a great deal about the ethics, judgment, and intensity of at least one Congressional subcommittee. For Josephine Truslow Adams was a political fraud, and a mentally-ill woman of long standing. While her ties to the Roosevelts were very tenuous and Earl Browder was deceived by her, the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee knew the extent of her delusions when it released her testimony smearing Franklin Roosevelt.

Born in Brooklyn in 1897, Josephine Adams graduated from Pratt Institute and began a career as an artist and teacher. From 1934 to 1941 she taught art at Swarthmore College. During this period she first got involved with Communist Party causes, attracted by the Party's support of loyalist Spain. By the late 1930s and early 1940s she was a staple on Party front organisations. She briefly became a *cause célèbre* in 1941. Early in the

[1] *Scope of Soviet Activity in the United States*, Park 54, US Senate Judiciary Committee (85th Congress, 1st Session, 1957), pp. 3,590–3,600.

While the complete transcript of Adams' testimony has never been released, her full story of the dealings with both Roosevelt and Browder was told by ex-Communists Frank Meyer and John Lautner to the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee. A taped interview Adams made with Earl Browder and Theodore Draper on 21 April 1956, hitherto unavailable, covered her story in detail. It is now in the Draper Papers at Emory University. I also obtained the FBI file on Adams, 100-22337. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations are taken from this voluminous file.

[2] Joseph Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin* (1981), pp. 202-204.

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year she testified before the House Judiciary Committee in opposition to a bill legalising wire tapping in felony cases, claiming that because of her civil liberties work, her telephone had been tapped. Two weeks after her appearance Swarthmore notified her that she would not be re-hired the following year. Adams charged that she was "a hot potato" because of her political activities but also blamed her troubles on a faculty cabal of "Union Now" supporters, and hostility from the President of the College whose supposed anti-Semitic policies she had denounced. A brief flurry of protests by her friends and political supporters could not save her job.[3]

While her name was "in the news" Adams first met Eleanor Roosevelt. Esther Lape (a friend of the First Lady) had hired Adams to paint a picture which she gave to Mrs Roosevelt. That in turn had led to occasional correspondence between Adams and Mrs Roosevelt. When the latter visited Swarthmore in April 1941 they met. After this encounter, Adams sent her another painting and was soon bombarding Mrs Roosevelt with innumerable long letters.[4]

It was her ties, however tenuous, to Mrs Roosevelt that brought Josephine Adams into the confidence of Earl Browder. From the day Browder entered the Atlanta Penitentiary in 1941 to begin serving a four-year sentence for passport fraud, the Communist Party had been demanding his release with greater frenzy. There were claims that his offence had been a mere technicality, the sentence unduly harsh. After Pearl Harbor, pleas on his behalf emphasised how his freedom would serve "national unity." Adams had been involved with several organisations defending the civil liberties of Communists; she quickly became a mainstay of the "Citizens' Committee to Free Earl Browder."

Although Adams later claimed that her first extended conversation with President Roosevelt took place at Hyde Park in August 1941 where she discussed the need to free Browder, there is no record that she was ever there or ever had an individual appointment at the White House. Just before Pearl Harbor she did write a letter to Eleanor Roosevelt asking that Browder be freed: she got a brief, noncommittal response. More than four months later, in April 1942, Adams addressed another plea to Mrs Roosevelt, including a number of documents produced by the "National Free Browder Congress." She also mentioned that Elizabeth Gurley Flynn had asked her to raise the

[3] *New York Times*, 23 May 1941, p. 24; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11 February, 24 May 1941; *Philadelphia Record*, 24 May 1941. Although Josephine claimed to be a member of *the* Adams family, she was not.

[4] Esther Lape Interview with Theodore Draper (13 February 1957, in Draper Papers).

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Browder issue and suggested that Mrs Roosevelt agree to meet Flynn to discuss it. Mrs Roosevelt promptly responded that she did not feel she should ask her husband about Browder. Moreover, since Flynn was a Communist "she would carry no weight" in Browder's behalf and it was useless to meet her. Adams wrote back, defending Flynn and suggesting that a non-Communist spokesman for Browder be allowed to meet her, but adding "This is the last time I shall speak of it to you." Mrs Roosevelt did not answer the letter.[5] The President finally gave the Party leader a pardon in May. Adams first met Browder on 4 July at a Party gala, convinced him that she had been instrumental in negotiating his release, and soon became a frequent family visitor. His confidence in her White House links was buttressed by a complicated affair that Adams soon orchestrated.

When Westbrook Pegler, a conservative anti-Roosevelt columnist, published a letter from an unnamed tank worker at the Baldwin Locomotive Works near Philadelphia claiming that production slow-downs were the result of union malfeasance and feather-bedding, Adams wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt on 4 December alleging that Pegler had obtained his information from "out-and-out Nazis" and suggesting an investigation was in order. The President himself spoke to J. Edgar Hoover about the affair and an FBI probe was soon under way. The Communist press also joined the hunt, identifying Pegler's source as one Andrew Hercha, a riveter at Baldwin who had quit immediately after Pegler's column had appeared. The leads Josephine Adams had provided were not productive and, after a cursory investigation, Hoover wrote to Mrs Roosevelt on 5 January that no credible evidence tied Hercha to the Nazis. Mrs Roosevelt sent a copy of this letter to Adams, presumably as a courtesy, since it was Adams who had first brought the case to her attention.[6]

Josephine Adams quickly used this ammunition to inflate her relationship with the White House. An FBI informant present at a party she attended on 9 January heard her boast of talking to "Eleanor" about the Hercha case. Adams quoted the First Lady as accusing Hoover of covering up for the fascists, claimed that the President had called him "Fascist" and "Himmler-like" and showed fellow-guests the letter from Hoover to Mrs Roosevelt to demonstrate how intimate her relationship to the Administration was. The nervous FBI director ordered a more thorough investigation of Hercha which did turn up vague hints that he might have had Nazi sympathies—among other things Hercha had visited Germany several times as a seaman between 1934 and 1936.

In later years Josephine Adams insisted that the President had put Hoover on the carpet for botching the investigation, and had encouraged her to conduct an independent study. According to Adams, she met Mrs Roosevelt twice to pass along her collected material. No evidence exists to support these claims; indeed it strains credulity that a President burdened by a World War could possibly care about Andrew Hercha, nor was there a scintilla of evidence that he had done anything illegal.

Adams did undertake her own investigation, and twice offered to supply the results to Mrs Roosevelt. The beleaguered Eleanor refused. Finally on 23 February her secretary wrote a pleading letter to Hoover asking him to explain how he arrived at his conclusions about Hercha, "so she can explain to Miss Adams and convince her? . . ." Even before Hoover had a chance to reply, the indomitable Josephine had mailed more accounts of her interviews and conclusions about Hercha. The FBI pointed out the discrepancy between what Adams said she had been told and what the same sources had told FBI agents. Hoover also informed Mrs Roosevelt that three people at Baldwin interviewed by Adams reported that she had claimed to be representing the Roosevelts. Mrs Roosevelt was outraged; she quickly fired off a letter to Adams castigating her for such presumption. Adams denied the charge, falsely claimed to have been secretive about her ties to Mrs Roosevelt, blamed everything on FBI persecution, and wept: "Your letter was such a shock that it has made me physically ill." Kindly Eleanor promptly wrote back, "Of course I believe you."[7]

Convinced by the Hoover letter of her bona fides, Earl Browder quickly decided to take advantage of this conduit to the White House and Adams's letters to Mrs Roosevelt soon began to be filled with Browder's views, accounts of some of his activities, and interesting and occasionally spicy political gossip. During the 1944 campaign, Adams sent along information that Carl Byoir, a public-relations man once accused of being a Nazi propagandist, was advising the Dewey campaign. Another letter relayed information from Browder

[5] Adams interview with Draper, *Scope of Soviet Activity*, p. 3591, Adams to ER, 1 December 1941; ER to Adams, 8 December 1941; Adams to ER, 15 April 1942; ER to Adams, 27 April 1942; Adams to ER, 2 May 1942; Adams to ER, December 1942 (in Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, Hyde Park).

[6] In addition to Adams's FBI file, those of Andrew Hercha, 100-168918, and Robert Heineman, 62-36434, contain information on the case. In Mrs Roosevelt's papers there is a typed note on the top of Hoover's 5 January letter indicating that a copy was sent to Adams on 8 January.

[7] JTA to ER, March 1943; ER to JTA, 18 March 1943 (in the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers).

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that Governor Dewey, busy criticising Communist support for the President, had made deals to obtain Party support in his earlier campaigns for District Attorney and Governor in New York.

MRS ROOSEVELT soon recognised what was being offered and sent many of Adams's letters to the President. In January 1944, she forwarded one with a notation that "I know nothing about her reliability." One month later Eleanor wrote Adams a brief response to another letter, noting: "I gave it to the President." On 13 July she informed Adams: "I think you should know that your letters go directly to the President. What then happens I do not know." Such assurances convinced Browder that he had a pipeline to the White House. Adams went even further, however, and led him to believe she was visiting FDR at the White House. Browder talked to her regularly, providing information and advice that he thought the President should have. Adams would reappear with Roosevelt's supposed answers, comments, and requests. Years later, Earl Browder still could not believe that Adams had the political sophistication to "have held up her end" by inventing FDR's responses.[8]

In fact, she had. White House records do not reflect any visits by her from 1943 to 1945. In one letter to Mrs Roosevelt, Adams mentioned the FBI's interest in learning if she visited the White House. She had told one agent who asked that she did so "every Thursday", but "he did not take it as a joke at first." The only indication that the President even read any of her letters was his handwritten note on one, dealing with a political crisis in Bolivia, that "this should be taken up with State Dep't." Moreover, despite all her letter-writing, Adams was hardly a household word in the White House. Early in October 1944, she sent the President a letter cautioning against "answering red-baiting with red-baiting" and signed J. Truslow Adams. An aide prepared a standard thank-you note and, with the President's signature, it was sent off to its presumed author—the famous historian James Truslow Adams. Josephine received the letter at her own address, and wrote to Mrs Roosevelt that she had burned it so no harm was done. Ironically, this letter was the only one which Josephine Adams ever received from Franklin Roosevelt—and he didn't even write it to her. Nor did she burn it—it was in her scrapbook which she showed to an FBI agent in 1951.[9]

ADAMS'S ELABORATE DECEPTION was not the only sign of her emotional instability. Her letters to Mrs Roosevelt were disordered and rambling. Handwritten, they meandered across pages and pages, often continuing up the margins as she ran out of space, and becoming less and less legible. Often two different kinds of paper were used. In between the nuggets of information supplied by Browder were pages and pages of dross.

None of this, of course, is *prima facie* evidence

[8] JTA to ER, January 1944; ER to JTA, 12 February 1944; ER to JTA, 13 July 1944; Adams and Browder Interview with Draper, Browder Interview with Draper, 13 March 1957 (in Draper Papers).

[9] JTA to ER, 4 July 1944; JTA to ER, 29 November 1944, ER to JTA, 13 January 1945 (in ER Papers). President's Office File 5621. Mrs Roosevelt chided General Watson that "everyone knows James Truslow Adams, the historian, would not write the President—and certainly not as she does."

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of mental imbalance but Adams's obsession with conspiracies was, to say the least, suggestive. She had charged that her telephone was tapped in 1940. During the Hercha case she had hinted that the FBI was interfering with her mail. Just before that she had complained to Mrs Roosevelt that her home had been robbed because of her political activities. Several letters in 1944 were filled with warnings about a Catholic-Trotskyite-Social Democratic-Nazi alliance in Latin America designed to thwart the Soviet-American coalition. One came complete with a hand-drawn chart showing A. A. Berle of the State Department directing an anti-Roosevelt pro-Nazi cabal with strings of influence running through the "Trotskyite" *Reader's Digest*, Max Eastman, James Carey of the CIO, Bishop Fulton Sheen, a "Dubious Lady", and the Catholic Church to an anti-Popular Front coalition of fascists.[10]

Franklin Roosevelt died in the spring of 1945; a few months later Earl Browder was abruptly removed as leader of the American Communist Party following the publication of an article by the French Communist Jacques Duclos criticising his "revisionism." Over the next several years, Adams developed a closer relationship with the FBI, volunteering her services as an occasional informant in 1950 and unsuccessfully offering to be a liaison between Browder and the Bureau. One year later she permitted an agent to photograph her scrapbook. He examined the perfunctory letters from Mrs Roosevelt and the one communication from FDR. "No indication is shown in these documents", he reported, "that Adams acted as a liaison between Earl Browder and President Roosevelt under the name of Mr Johnson or any other name as claimed by her previously." While Adams continued occasionally to provide the FBI with information, J. Edgar Hoover concluded in March 1954 that her lack of forthrightness, her unreliability, and her "exaggerated statements concerning her relationship with the Roosevelts" disqualified Adams from being considered a confidential source.[11]

One FBI report from the early 1940s had described Adams as "in an emotional and intellectual state of unbalance." The agent who interviewed her in 1950 was struck by her manner. "She is extremely nervous as is particularly evident in her continuous, unceasing conversation." By 1956 her obsessions had become overwhelming. Interviewed by an agent at the New York Infirmary early in September, Adams insisted she was merely painting a mural and residing at the hospital until it was finished. In her next breath, however, she complained of being given unauthorised psychiatric treatment and of a doctors' plot to commit her to a mental institution. She also was convinced that in August she had been subjected to a lobotomy by means of an "ice-pick treatment" which left no scars. Her knowledge of all this came from nurses' "voices" which she could hear from long distances away. In the space of a few days, Adams called the FBI's New York office twice to give reports on her condition; agents there logically concluded that she was suffering from mental illness.

IT WAS IN THIS STATE of mind that Josephine Adams told Robert Morris of the Senate Committee on 28 December that "communist doctors" had been busy giving her shock treatments and performing lobotomies in an effort to convince her she was mentally ill. Inexplicably, they were also injecting her with truth serum. Her only protection, she told Morris, was to put her full story on the record. In spite of all her delusions and the patently ludicrous story she had told, Adams was allowed to leave the Infirmary and testify in executive session in January before a subcommittee of the United States Senate. Only a portion of her testimony was ever released, perhaps because, as one FBI agent who examined the complete account noted, much of it was "rambling and unorganized" and counsel "had difficulty at times in eliciting responsive and precise answers." Even the published portion is hardly a model of clarity; what remained unpublished can only be guessed from Adams's mental state. After finishing with the subcommittee Adams returned to the Infirmary.

Following her testimony, she signed a book contract, with Isaac Don Levine, a veteran anti-Communist journalist, as her ghost writer. By March 1957, however, Levine began to complain about her tardiness in producing the documentary evidence she claimed to have about her ties to the President. When it finally arrived, Levine became very suspicious.[12]

THERE WERE MORE THAN a score of letters from FDR to Adams, sprinkled with the same irreverence and flightiness as Adams's own correspondence. Of the 21 dates on which FDR supposedly wrote from Washington, he was not there on ten.

[10] JTA to ER, 11 February 1944 (in ER Papers).

[11] Adams attempted to interest the Truman White House in her stories, but with little success. She also wrote one letter urging Browder's deportation. JTA to Mr Ross, 9 November 1945, JTA to Mr Hassett, 29 December 1945, JTA to President Truman, 24 September 1945 (in Truman Library).

[12] Levine to Bella Dodd, 21 March 1957, Levine to JTA, 6 June 1957, Levine to Dodd, 12 June 1957 (in Isaac Don Levine Papers). Mr and Mrs Levine kindly allowed me to examine their entire file on Josephine Adams and answered extensive questions during an interview on 9 July 1979.

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Some of Adams's letters to the President were so prescient about future events that it was hard to avoid the conclusion that they had been written after the fact. One had the salutation "Dear Little White Father."

All of them were forgeries. Levine found a handwritten note by Adams (dated 28 March 1945) with reminders to write letters on various topics. Indeed, Adams admitted the fraud. In a 1958 letter to Levine pleading for the return of her genuine correspondence with Mrs Roosevelt, she plaintively asked whether "the *good* letters [were] in the package you left at Bella's or were they with the publisher?"

I Was Roosevelt's Secret Emissary was quietly dropped from McKay's list. Adams's sister returned the publisher's advance, and her brief moment in the limelight ended.[13]

Her exposure as a forger did not bring Josephine Adams back to reality. She merely transferred her paranoid delusions to a new set of villains—Mrs Roosevelt and Esther Lape who had conspired to "put me under neuro-therapy and other things at night." Adams communicated with J. Edgar Hoover in May 1958 to complain in a rambling and incoherent letter that Mrs Roosevelt and her sister were seeking to have her committed and that the latter had instigated the lobotomy. She pleaded with the Director for help: "I would feel indeed lost if I could not count on you to defend my right to be heard no matter how barmy."

Josephine Adams was soon thereafter committed to the Norristown Sanitarium in Pennsylvania. She died there more than a decade later. Were it not for her ties, however tenuous, with the Roosevelts and Earl Browder, her tragic, troubled life would not merit such prolonged voyeurism. Because she made herself an historical figure with her charges, however, her obsessions become a matter of public interest and concern.

THE MOST SHOCKING ASPECT of this whole affair was the willingness of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee to sponsor the public airing of a story it must have at least suspected was flawed. Not only did it conceal knowledge of her psychiatric problems, it released an edited version of her testimony which minimised its disorganisation. The FBI informed Robert Morris that Adams's version of the Hercha story was inaccurate, yet that apparently did not stay the Commit-

[13] All of the forgeries are in the Levine papers. The information about the dates comes from a letter from Herman Kahn of the FDR Library to Grace Tully, 8 August 1957 (in Levine's Papers). Bella Dodd, an ex-Communist, was Mrs Adams's lawyer. Mrs William Troy, Interview with Klehr, 18 January 1978.

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tee's confidence in her version of other events. The most charitable interpretation of its behaviour is that it was so ready to believe the worst about Franklin Roosevelt that it suspended disbelief. More plausibly, it was prepared to use whatever was at hand, no matter how tainted, to suggest that the late President had secretly dealt with domestic Communists.[14]

Josephine Adams certainly did not have the influence she claimed on the Roosevelts. The information from Browder that she transmitted to Roosevelt was mostly innocuous. Browder certainly proffered suggestions about political strategy and foreign policies, but there is no evidence that they were heeded.

Moreover, by 1943 neither the President nor his wife had any illusions about American Communists. Mrs Roosevelt's letters to Adams made it quite clear that she did not trust them and that the President would not credit them. Of less historical note, but more intriguing, is the influence Josephine Adams had on Earl Browder and, hence, on the Communist Party. Convinced that he and the President were exchanging views, did Browder make decisions based on the word of a mentally deranged woman? How could such a sophisticated man fail to see what an FBI agent quickly discerned in the early 1940s?

Years later, Browder could recall only one significant act directly attributable to Adams's supposed conversations with FDR. In 1943 she reported the President's eagerness to minimise independent Third Parties in the coming election. The Minnesota Democratic and Farmer-Labor Parties had been discussing merger for some time. Browder told Adams to assure the President that if the Democrats would cooperate there would be no problem. He then urged Communists and their sympathisers in the Farmer-Labor Party not to be obstructionists, and the unification sailed through early in 1944. Quite likely, it would eventually have come anyway, but Josephine Truslow Adams perhaps deserves some credit for helping to create the Democratic Farmer-Labor Party by deceiving Earl Browder.[15]

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Her indirect influence may have been far more substantial. Browder later insisted that, knowing Roosevelt's views so intimately, he was able to formulate his own policies with more confidence. His decision to dissolve the Communist Party in 1944 and replace it with a political association designed to function within the two-party system may well have been influenced by his belief that the President approved of the action and that Communists would be tolerated in the Democratic Party. Because he did not hide his supposed connections with FDR, Browder also guaranteed that the Russians would hear of them. Did this non-existent relationship worry them enough to lead to Browder's political elimination? Neither assertion can be confirmed, but both are plausible.

WHY WAS Josephine Adams able to hoodwink Earl Browder? There was a surface plausibility to her story, supported by bits and pieces of documentation. Some of the very character traits that can be adduced as evidence of Adams's imbalance were not outside the range of acceptable Communist behaviour. This is not to imply that Communists are mentally ill, but only to suggest that any small, millennial, extremist organisation attracts discontented people, some of whom have serious psychological debilities. The atmosphere of secrecy, intrigue, and danger appeals to some people. Paranoia can be regarded as a rational response to political persecution, and conspiracy theories accepted as a matter of course.

Communists in particular were liable to see conspiracies everywhere. Since they were sure of the inevitable march of history, Communists came to believe that obstacles to their plans were the result of sinister cabals by their numerous enemies. Even very disparate enemies could be lumped together "objectively." Despite their differences, for example, socialists and fascists were charged with cooperating in the early 1930s, and during the Moscow Purge Trials the Soviets blamed their ills on a conspiracy of "Bukharinites, Trotskyites, Social Democrats, wreckers, and Nazis", all united to destroy the great October Revolution.

[14] Robert Morris is usually spoken of in very engaging terms even by people on the opposite side of the political fence. Phillip Jaffe, for instance, wrote that he was "honest and reliable even with those whose politics he abhorred" (*The Rise and Fall of American Communism*, p. 164). Mr Morris did not respond to my request for help and information.

[15] Earl Browder, Interview with Draper, 13 March 1957; Adams and Browder, Interview with Draper. In all the JTA-ER correspondence there is only one reference to the Minnesota situation—a letter from JTA to ER, January 1944 (in the ER Papers). It was to this letter that Mrs Roosevelt attached a memo to FDR saying she knew nothing of Adams's reliability.

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Is it any wonder that Josephine Adams's fantasies did not seem beyond the pale? Possessed of a certain glibness and an active imagination, she played Earl Browder for a fool. The Senate Internal Security Subcommittee could have done more to discredit American Communism by exposing her than by trying to use her to smear President Roosevelt.

AUTHORS

R. K. Narayan is one of India's most distinguished writers. "Emden" will appear in his collection, *Malgudi Days*, published by Viking Press, N.Y., and Heinemann in London, which will be followed in the spring by a new novel, *A Tiger for Malgudi*. (Malgudi is the imaginary southern Indian city in which for over 40 years he has set his novels and short stories.)

Martin Esslin is Professor of Drama, Stanford University, and was from 1963–77 Head of Radio Drama at the BBC. He is the author of many books on the theatre, including *Brecht: A Choice of Evils, Meditations: Essays on Brecht, Beckett and the Media* (n.e. Eyre Methuen, 1980, 1981) and *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of World Theatre* (n.e. Thames and Hudson, 1981). His study of *The Age of Television* was published this year by W. H. Freeman.

Asa Briggs, who was created a Life Peer in 1976, is Provost of Worcester College, Oxford, and Chancellor of the Open University. His many published works include *Victorian Cities* (n.e. Penguin, 1968) and *Victorian People* (n.e. University of Chicago Press, 1975), his four-volume history of broadcasting in the United Kingdom (Oxford University Press), and *The Power of Steam* (Michael Joseph, 1982). His essay is taken from a paper prepared for a Smithsonian Institution Symposium.

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Stephen Gardiner has been a practising architect since 1957; his work includes ILEA schools, housing at Milton Keynes, and buildings for handicapped children. He is currently Architectural Critic of *The Observer*. His publications include *The Evolution of the House* (Constable, 1975, Paladin, 1976) and the "Modern Masters" volume on Le Corbusier (Fontana, 1974).

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Jan Morris, whose many books include *Cities* (1963), *Venice* (rev. ed. 1974), and *The Oxford Book of Oxford* (1978), has three new works published this autumn: *The Spectacle of Empire* (Faber), *A Venetian Bestiary* (Thames and Hudson), and *Wales: The First Place* (Aurum Press).

Terence Prittie is Editor of *Britain and Israel*. His numerous books include *Whose Jerusalem?* and *The Velvet Chancellors: The History of Post-War Germany* (Muller, 1981, 1979). He was for many years a foreign correspondent for the old (Manchester) *Guardian*.

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Harvey Klehr is Professor of Political Science at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. His first book, *Communist Cadre*, was published by the Hoover Institution Press; *American Communism: The Depression Decade* will be brought out in 1983 by Basic Books.

Indictments & Convictions: Mr Christopher Hitchens, an editor of *The Nation* in New York, has asked us to point out an error in a footnote on p. 82 of our May number. It cites his remark in *The Nation* in connection with the reporting of the Susan Sontag incident in New York City ("the issue of 'double standards' is an exceptionally difficult one"). But evidently this was intended to refer not to himself but to others.

The New York Times had erred in its report, quoted by us in turn, to the effect that *The Nation* had simply omitted a startling paragraph in Susan Sontag's text which contrasted the truthfulness (on Soviet Russian realities) of *Reader's Digest* with the distortions of *The Nation* and the *New Statesman*. This was an oversight. *The New York Times* (and later ENCOUNTER) should have noted that the missing paragraph—deleted at Ms Sontag's insistence—was indeed published by Mr Hitchens in his prefatory remarks.

We promise to watch these kinds of goings-on in Manhattan more carefully. To be sure, the Sontag indictment of *The Nation*'s old record of pro-Soviet propaganda over many years still stands; nevertheless, we are pleased to note that *The Nation* has the new courage of its old convictions. M.J.L.

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LETTERS

Hitler & the Armenians

MR TÜRKKAYA ATAÖV (ENCOUNTER, May, p.92) asks for details of the original document in which Adolf Hitler referred to the Armenians during a briefing he held on 22 August 1939, and claims that he has before him "the text of that speech."

The text, as far as I am aware, has not been published. Dr Otto Stahmer, counsel for Göring, stated at the Nuremberg trial that "No one present at that meeting was charged with taking down the events in the meeting stenographically. . . ." (26 November 1945). The documents which are available consist of notes taken by persons present, each concentrating naturally on aspects of the *Führer*'s speech which interested him.

The passage in question is contained in US document L-3, referred to at Nuremberg as Exhibit USA-28. It was published in *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, volume vii, p.753 (Office of the US chief of counsel for prosecution of Axis criminality, Washington, 1946), and quoted in *The Times* (London), 24 November 1945 (p.7) and in the *New York Times* of the same date (p.4).

> "Our strength is in our quickness and our brutality. Ghengis Khan had millions of women and children killed by his own will and with a gay heart. History sees only in him a great state builder. What weak Western European civilization thinks about me does not matter. I have given the order and will have every one shot, who utters even one word of criticism that the aim of the war is not to attain certain lines, but consists in the physical destruction of the opponent. Thus for the time being I have sent to the East only my 'Death's Head Units' with the order to kill without pity or mercy all men, women and children of Polish race or language. Only in such a way will we win the vital space that we need. Who still talks nowadays of the extermination of the Armenians?"

EDWARD GULBEKIAN

Mitcham
Surrey

I AM ENCLOSING the *original* texts of the two Hitler speeches, made on 22 August, 1939. I have them in front of me now, as I had them before sending you my earlier communication. There is *no contradiction* in terms in what I have stated. I have referred to the *original, official text* published in the *reliable* Nuremberg documents (Tribunal Militaire International, *Procès des Grands Criminels de Guerre devant le Tribunal Militaire International: Nuremberg, 14 novembre 1945—1er octobre 1946*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 338f and 523f). As I have indicated correctly earlier, you will see for yourselves that there is *no reference* in them to the Armenians. We have every reason to assume that Hitler spoke to his generals that day in German, his and their native tongue. Hence, the Nuremberg documents are the most *authoritative*, perhaps the only *authentic* sources. The English translations, which have appeared in the two dailies as well, carry an additional sentence, which does not occur in the authorised German text. Who added it, and for what purpose?

Edward Gulbekian has also taken care to underline the only reference to Turkey in Hitler's speech: "After Kemâal's death, Turkey will be ruled by morons and half idiots." If Hitler had made a similar degrading statement about the Armenians, I would find it contemptible. However, as the author of a book in English entitled *Turkish Foreign Policy: 1939-1945*, I think that you will agree with me in assessing subsequent events as proving that Hitler's assertion actually suited himself and his Nazi entourage quite well.

Finally, everything that this Nazi leader has said has been verified as wrong, mal-intended and unjust. Why cling to a statement, controversially attributed to him, which adds nothing to the "Armenian question"? Hitler was *not* an expert on this issue; we have nothing to learn from him. I would not be moved at all even if Hitler had made such a statement.

TÜRKKAYA ATAÖV

Ankara University
Turkey

Kristol's "Plain Truths"

THERE was a compact crispness to the breakdown of the Palestinian problem which, I imagine, disturbed many of the readers of Irving Kristol's "Some Plain Truths" (ENCOUNTER, September–October). If all this is so, how is it that the conventional wisdom prevailing in the Western world can be at such wide variance with these "plain truths"? I do not mean to challenge the Kristol presentation, only to suggest my puzzlement that so much obscurity and ambiguity prevail on these issues.

It has, for example, been very hard for me to come to grips with the moving problem of the Palestinian Refugees, so much more poignantly on our minds since the Lebanese Christian massacre in Beirut. The Palestinian propagandists say they were cruelly driven out in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, and have been subjected to a bitter homelessness ever since. The Israeli defenders say that they fled from wartime dangers, mostly at the instructions of Arab leaders, and have been artificially (and cruelly) kept as "refugees" for decades in order to keep alive an "irredentism" against the Zionist state of Israel.

How many still are there? Figures diverge to an absurd degree. Are the children and even the grandchildren of the refugees of 1948 still considered to be "refugees", even if they were born in another and sometimes far-away Arab land and have (some of them) found jobs and accommodation? The UN commissioners register all births among the Palestine refugee records (and, it is said, rarely get around to striking the dead off the official list).

Are there any points in the bitter decade-long argument on which there is some objective and conclusive evidence, and on which (may the Truth be served!) there is a two-sided agreement? Evidently there are, and if this is surprising it is also hopeful. The dialogue is not merely, or always, two gramophone machines playing their pre-recorded noises at each other.

1. I was most interested to learn (from a Swiss article, quoting the *Jerusalem Post* of 19–25 Sept.) of the statement in 1973 by Haled Al Azm (he was Prime Minister of Syria in the 1948 war). According to Al Azm, there was indeed an appeal by Arab governments to the Arabs in Palestine to evacuate their homes and go to bordering countries. (Later, of course, they would return in triumph.) In his own words:

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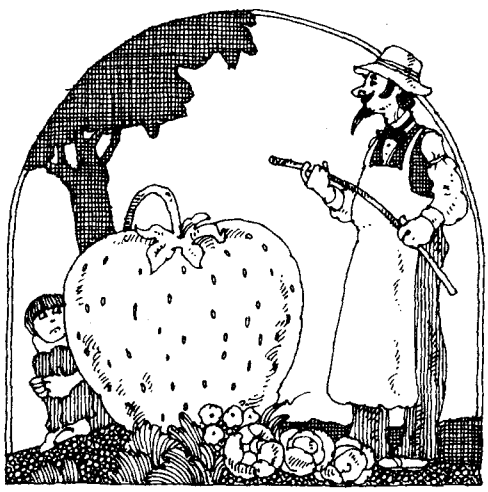
"Since 1948 we have been demanding the return of refugees to their homes; but we ourselves are the ones who encouraged them to leave . . . we have brought destruction on one million Arab refugees. . . ."

The sense of responsibility is sincere even if the numerical aspect may be exaggerated. Other calculations put it closer to half-a-million. On this point one cannot help but be impressed also by the Israeli argument that Israel, too, has had a refugee problem as Jewish communities throughout North Africa and the Middle East came under fire. The total Jewish refugee population that has been accepted in Israel, absorbed and, to one extent or another, integrated comes to: 621,000.

2. Is it right, then, to conclude that the Arab leadership has for more than three decades deliberately kept the pot simmering? A grievous charge—and one which assumes a degree of unity among the Arab decision-makers and discipline among their peoples which is unique in its single-mindedness. Have there been no opportunities for the poor souls we have been seeing in their battered Lebanese camps (with or without their PLO military headquarters) to be accepted, absorbed and integrated? The harsh fact is that nowhere have there been substantial offers of citizenship to these uprooted masses, at least not in the Arab world. Some 30 years ago the United States had allocated 2,000 immigration visas for Arab refugees. But the official American representative, Mr Robert Richard Burton, was told by the Arab governments that "they would not let the refugees go." In Burton's view (and harsh though it is, it has turned out to be true), they wanted to hold the refugees on Israel's border "to act as a festering sore, thereby causing as much misery to the Israelis as they could. . . ." It is good to know that at least some small part of the refugee population (although their names are probably still on the official register) have in point of fact left the camps to build a new life for themselves elsewhere. But what a horror it is to contemplate that no great, serious, non-political effort was ever made—as was, at least, for the Boat People on the South-east Asian seas—to give new hope and opportunity for these Tent People on the Middle East sands!

3. I do not think it is right to continue to play "the numbers game", a grisly Body Count contest in which nobody has an interest in coming up with accurate

The End of "God's Country"



New York City

PEOPLE WHO LIVE *within the 323 S.M.S.A.s (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area) have begun to call all places not so blessed "the boonies."*

The boonies are the land of the people Out There. This slang term of the 1960s is a shortening of boondocks, from the Tagalog bundok, ***the native Philippine Islanders' term for "mountain." (During World War II, U.S. Marines were equipped with "boondockers", heavy boots for plodding through rugged mountain terrain.) Any out-of-the-way place or remote village soon became known as "the boondocks."***

OUR LANGUAGE would suffer a great loss if all rural places were lumped together and derogated as "the boonies." To resist this homogenization—and to encourage the creative, colorful derogation of small towns that has always studded the American language—I turned to F. G. Cassidy, director-editor of The Dictionary of American Regional English.

TO A QUESTION *interviewers posed to thousands of native speakers about "a small or unimportant place", these were the most frequent responses:*

Sticks, wide spot in the road, boondocks, burg, hick town, backwoods, one-horse town, Podunk, four-corners, no-man's land, hideaway, whistle-stop and jerkwater town.

The last two are from railroad lingo. "Jerkwater" comes from an operation of railroad crews when small boilers required frequent refilling, and water tanks were few. A leather bucket at the end of a long rope was used to jerk the water from nearby streams. (Railroad buffs will send in a hundred other derivations; no frantic flagging-down will stop them.)

OTHER *delightful put-downs of small towns uncovered include:*

dump, ghost town, Hell's half-acre, dogtown, neck of the woods, Timbuktu (a real place in West Africa's Mali), tules, back 40, Dogpatch, hicksville, last chance, plumb-nelly, baddy's cow-pasture, tank town.

CURIOUSLY, "God's Country"—hardly a put-down, more of a boast, first recorded in the Civil War as a proud description of the North by Union soldiers—has been taking on a pejorative connotation, as in the middle of nowhere.

William Safire

NEW YORK TIMES

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statistics. There are critics who charge that the UN refugee figure of 1,902,843 is padded. Both the US State Department's and the PLO's table of total Palestinians come roughly to the same result: something over 4 million. But in the *New York Times*' report there are none in Saudi Arabia—whereas the PLO claims 127,000! Surely there must be some fairly simple way of establishing at least this! And whereas the State Department puts 120,000 in Iraq, the PLO claims only 20,000 there. In any event this much would appear to be clear: that if one were to consider as real Palestinian refugees only those who still live in their camps and have no means of independent subsistence, including those who left Israel in 1948 or 1967 (and their immediate dependents who were unable to find a better life elsewhere), we would find ourselves dealing with the destinies of some 400,000 persons.

4. Is this not an opportunity for Great Britain to assert its wonted "moral leadership in the world"? Shouldn't the Americans at long last recover some of their old ethical idealism and try to tackle the problem with offers of a large generous "Marshall Plan" for human beings? Why is our Europe—which has learned from innumerable tragedies that refugee miseries cannot be ended by military or political means but by human deeds of acceptance, absorption, and integration—so busy welcoming Chairman Yasser Arafat whose PLO strategy is to keep the poor refugees locked into the abject life of their camps?

5. It could be that we in the West have opted for a kind of "Them" and "Us" dualism, a double-standard which overlooks their transgressions (they don't know any better, poor sods) and remains indifferent to their tragic miseries (the poor will always be with us). Terrorism amongst us is reprehensible and must be crushed. Terrorism "out there" is understandable. Refugees amongst us should be given their citizens' rights and be accommodated with the normal decencies. Refugees "out there" can be politically exploited, militarily endangered, and condemned unto generations to lives of rootlessness.

6. What if the Germans in the post-War 1940s had kept their refugees from the Sudetenland, from the Polish and Russian areas of "displaced persons", in camps on their borders? Never gave them normal civic rights, full citizenship? Encouraged them to be recruited into a "German Liberation Organisation" (GLO)? Considered it only "natural" and "legitimate" for guerrilla raiders to harass East European villages across the border? Closed their eyes if such "GLO" partisans killed Polish and Russian and Czech athletes at the Moscow Olympics? Ignored the horrific implications of making war on those who deprived them of their old homeland, driving them "into the sea" (the Baltic presumably) and, if necessary, over the Ural Mountains?

Oh, no! this is not the way we do things any more in civilised Europe. But this is not the way things should be done anywhere in the world. It may be that we cannot prevent it "out there", but we should not betray our souls by apologising for old-style violence as the means for new ethnic advantage. Our double standards are pushing us into systematic hypocrisy and cynicism. Down with them! . . .

This is the one additional "Plain Truth" which I want to submit to you.

LOUIS M. JOURDAIN

Geneva

On Amos Oz, & Others

AMOS OZ's sincere and poignant piece (April) put the Israelis' case clearer than I have ever seen it. By doing so, however, he exposed its basic weaknesses, which relate to the world's present mesmerisation by maps and boundaries.

I sympathise with his distaste for armchair critics in Europe, who should more fairly themselves be paying for the anti-Semitism of their fathers and grandfathers. I also admire the attempt to draw closer to the Arab enemy by pointing out what is in common against this soft ex-imperialist Europe. By excoriating imperialism, however, he not only distorts the past but perhaps rules out Israel's only long-term hope of peaceful coexistence.

Nationalism's world-take-over left the Jews on the hop. As in a game of musical chairs, they found themselves without a "land" when everyone else had staked "theirs" out. (Not quite everyone—it is easy to forget those who lost completely and were equally homogeneous: ENCOUNTER readers have been recently reminded of the Armenians.)

Imperialism stood for precisely the opposite system of land-ownership, wherein everyone belonged to everywhere. British imperialism, in particular, protected not only all its *citizens* but the universal principles of the free sea, free travel, free migration, and almost free residence.

Even more to the point with regard to Palestine, the British Empire allowed the Jews to regain a substantial foothold there. Israelis insisted that Zion must be in Palestine. (Amos Oz skirts rather lightly this point, which is the crucial European/American excuse, not the Holocaust: the British Empire had offered a relatively fertile and uninhabited chunk of East Africa.) Then a supranational government was surely the only way to achieve a multiracial state. No partition of the land they were occupying will be agreed by the Palestinians. Why should they accept either of the chief arguments Mr Oz puts forward, which seem to be sensitivity to suffering for which they were not at all to blame, and acceptance of a *fait accompli*? The Western world has, by in effect bowing to the latter, implied a condonation of invasion and expropriation which weakens its stand against all such aggression elsewhere, most topically in the Falkland Islands.

As in Northern Ireland, the British in Palestine were vilified by extremists on both sides who were hoping for outright victory. This should be a sure sign of fair government; but, then as now, nationalist ideology was supreme and imperialism preposterous. This fashion (naive in America, jaded in Europe, hypocritical in Russia) has deprived the world's numerous blurred areas of the chance of neutral, foreign mandates. It continues to turn them one by one into disaster areas. The temptation to unblur them by genocide or forced displacement is irresistible under the blind rules of one live body, one vote. Now that we have had forty years of Post-Imperialism and the UN, it is surely time we re-examined the evidence for resting so much faith on the concept of Nations keeping Peace among Nations. Empires, from the Roman to the British, have normally done a much better job, internally and even externally.

NOT ONLY have we swept aside the benefits of liberal imperialism, but we have continued to ignore the fact that *every* "nation" is descended from people who at one time

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Life & Letters Today

Westminster

TRUE OR FALSE: **Problems of defining "English" (the people, not the tongue) arose at Parliament's Question Time when that remorselessly grim M.P. of the Scottish National Party, Mr Gordon Wilson, complained to Mrs Thatcher about her reference this week in a London speech to "If England to herself be true . . ." [Andrew Alexander reports from the House of Commons].**

That, he said, had caused wide offence in Scotland (groans). Mrs Thatcher, who insisted that she was very ready to pay tribute to the Scots, admitted that she had had momentary qualms herself, but had decided that she could hardly "edit Shakespeare" (cheers).

This is very unfashionable of course. There is not just the Scots Nats but also bodies like the Commission for Racial Equality in the wings worried about Shakespeare's shameless racialism. The CRE will probably demand that Shakespeare is amended.

DAILY MAIL

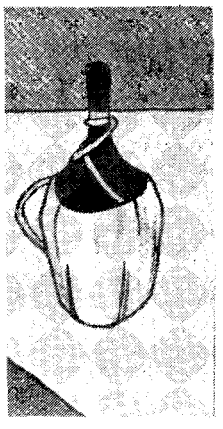
New York City

COINAGE: *"Learn the right of coining words", wrote poet Leigh Hunt, "in the quick mint of joy."*

It's no big deal [William Safire writes] provided the need for a word exists. Meteorologist is not a useful word, because it seems to mean "one who studies meteors." When I tune in a weather forecast, I am rarely warned of falling meteors; therefore, I welcome a new word like **"weathercaster."** *In Omaha, meteorologist Gary Wiese reviewed a forecast that had turned out wrong, and called his review* **"an aftercast."** *That is good coinage; simple, understandable, useful. Thomas Griffith at* Time *magazine offers a portmanteau coinage to describe roundabout chatterings:* **"circumloquacious."**

NEW YORK TIMES

London



NOM DE VIN: *Embarrassment at the name of "Liebfraumilch", in this column, predates the present German wine scandals. The biographer of the late Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, relates that in 1945 Lord Athlone was in Washington for Roosevelt's funeral. As Governor-General of Canada, he was staying at the Canadian embassy. At dinner he asked the butler the name of the wine. It was a "Liebfraumilch", but the butler thought it would be improper to use a German word to a member of the British Royal Family in wartime. "Milk of the Virgin, your excellency", he replied, without blushing.*

THE TIMES

New York

O.D.: *Craig Claiborne, food editor of* The New York Times, *occasionally passes along food for thought:*

"Have you ever heard of a Southern term, 'pure O.D.', as in 'To my mind that is pure O.D. nonsense'? My mother used it often in Mississippi and it is fairly current throughout the South."

In current slang use **"O.D."** *means* **"overdose"**, *derived from police and coroners' reports in the 1950s about people who died from an overdose of drugs. In the '60s, the drug culture turned it into a verb. As a noun, its meaning varied from the simple overdose to any sky-high behaviour.*

"Officer of the Day" *does not fit, nor does* **"Olive Drab"**, *(the name of a colour unique to the military which some fashion designers are now trying to fob off as "forest green", which it is not).*

"Out of Date" *is another, less common, meaning of "O.D." But that meaning is hardly the catfish's meow in Mississippi.*

Flexner, the king of slang, has come up with the answer:

"Another use of O.D. is as an abbreviation for 'ox dung', which has been a rural euphemism in parts of the South and Midwest since the early part of this century."

Thus, **"pure O.D. nonsense"** *is a gentlewoman's euphemism for a succinct barnyard epithet. Might be a good idea to bring it back; we're overdosed on barnyard epithets, and their shock value is gone.*

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

Falkland Islands

SPEED READING: *Fr Spraggon showed us 27 bullet holes that riddled his home nestling behind his small timber, red-roofed church on the Stanley waterfront. He said: "After the curfew they shot at anything that moved. . . . Bullets ripped into the outside wall. They passed through the porch and hit the sitting room where 20 minutes earlier I had been reading."*

A thick volume entitled Moral and Pastoral Theology *had a bullet hole straight through its middle. The priest said: "They got through this quicker than I did."*

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

MUSICOLOGY: **The BBC in *Nationwide* last week presented a so-called singer who, seated at a piano, gave voice, through his nose and in what seemed to be a feeble attempt at simulation of the American intonation, to a caterwaul which—as far as could be made out—was in some strange tongue.**

It commenced, "WODDIZZIDDER BOUT CHEW", **became completely unintelligible except for a passage that sounded like** "OWDER SITE BIRD NODDOWDER MIND", **and followed by a further few seconds of gobbledegook in which** "JURZE DER WAY TER TRARDER SAY WODDING LEARN MEANS" **was discernible.**

Can anyone identify the language and, if so, offer a translation?

THE STANDARD

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or another invaded "their" land, usually either exterminating, enslaving or driving away those there before. This evasion is understandable, of course. If the world adopted the main Jewish historical argument—their occupation of Palestine two thousand years ago—as the standard for right of abode, there would be chaos. Even Argentina's arbitrarily chosen *status quo* of the 1820s would overthrow most existing states. Sadly, *this* is why unusually few governments are supporting Argentina's anti-colonialist line, not that its fascist rulers are being classically "colonialist" against the people who live in the Falkland Isles. Or should I say "lived", since an overwhelming majority of the people living there at the moment are soldiers and may continue to be for ever.

In some Chinese language papers in this the last of the great imperial mandates (credited rarely and accurately by Professor Alan Walters, in the same edition of ENCOUNTER, as one of the freest places in the world), the idea has been mooted of the people of Hong Kong buying and populating the Falklands, so much more spacious but hardly more barren than their present island home. Such a scheme must seem absurd in the comfortable West where the limits of imaginative reasoning are drawn by the complacency of comparative national homogeneity. It is not so absurd for a successful people who may soon join the ranks of the homeless simply because the world deems them " part of China."

SIMON VICKERS

Hong Kong

The Hiss Case & Legal Logic

I WOULD like to add a footnote to Melvin Lasky's observation that, at least for some, casuistry and self-deception are the order of the day so far as Alger Hiss's guilt is concerned ("John Reed & Alger Hiss", August).

As Lasky notes, Hiss was recently (1975) readmitted to the practice of law in Massachusetts by a remarkable order of the Supreme Judicial Court. The Court repeatedly said that it was obligated to and did accept without question Hiss's conviction as "conclusive" on the factual issue of Hiss's guilt. It considered Hiss to be a "convicted perjurer" and "guilty as charged." In the face of this and an earlier case in which the same Court seemed to say that to be readmitted a person convicted of a serious crime had to admit his guilt, Hiss's request for reinstatement would appear to have been hopeless, since Hiss, as always, continued to insist he was innocent. In fact, for this very reason the Board of Bar Overseas, which first heard Hiss's petition, recommended that it be denied.

The Court, however, distinguished the earlier case and held that it would be unfair and unjust to require a person to admit guilt of a criminal act that "on sincere reasoning" he "honestly believes" he did not commit. But, as the Court apparently did not notice, if Hiss was "guilty as charged" he could not have such an honest belief. Hiss's crime was perjury and his state of mind was an element of the crime. By definition, he made statements under oath which "he [did] not believe to be true." There is no way Hiss could at any time thereafter rationally form an honest belief that at the time his state of mind had been otherwise. Only if he were innocent, could Hiss hold such an honest belief.

The Court may, of course, have just made a simple error, as courts do, but its opinion suggests something else. The respect the Court showed to Hiss's claim to be a victim of a miscarriage of justice and to the tributes to Hiss by prominent lawyers and law professors—the sympathy and admiration the Court showed for Hiss himself, citing his "forthright and principled" testimony, his generosity toward those who had prosecuted him and his outstanding and impeccable record, apart from "the incident [that is, perjury] in question"—and, finally, the Court's complete omission of any reference to Communism, Russia or espionage, except for an allusion to "the breach of confidence and trust which underlay his conviction"—all suggest that, consciously or not and despite its claims to the contrary, the Court actually thought that Hiss might be innocent. If so, it was no doubt easy for the judges to overlook the impossibility of Hiss's both being guilty and having honest beliefs he could have only if innocent.

FRANKLIN HUNT

New York City

"The Real Charlotte"

AS ANOTHER READER of Charlotte Bach's "voluminous" works and as another person who knew her very well indeed, I would like to take issue with the bitchy piece of calumny published in your September-October issue under the spuriously objective title "The Real Charlotte." It really is a pity that Colin Wilson has rushed into print before he has had time either to come to terms with Bach's theories, or with his own reaction to the loss of a friend and the discovery of the deception which she perpetrated on him.

In the space of a short letter it is not possible to cover in detail the systematic distortion of the theory and of the person which Colin has managed to cram into his essay. I hope it will be sufficient to say, firstly, that his lamentable misunderstanding of the theory of emergent evolution has been pointed out to him repeatedly by many different people on many separate occasions, yet he persists in repeating the same schoolboy howlers in 1982 as he made (understandably, then) in 1973. There can be no question that his is a precisely motivated misunderstanding, such as occurs whenever a new theory meets with a mind which is threatened by its implications.

Secondly I should like to submit that any disinterested assessor could not help but find Colin's own account of the human condition to be flimsy and utterly without conviction—especially when placed alongside an undistorted account of Dr Bach's view. Readers will have the opportunity to make up their own minds with the forthcoming publication of the "Selected Writings" by Wildwood House.

MICHAEL ROTH M.B.B.S., B.Sc.
editor of
Charlotte Bach: Twentieth Century Shaman.
(Selected Writings of Charlotte Bach)

London

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